THE

# BISHOP OF LANDAFF'S "APOLOGY FOR THE BIBLE" EXAMINED.

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## BISHOP OF LANDAFF'S "APOLOGY FOR THE BIBLE" EXAMINED.

IN A

#### SERIES OF LETTERS,

ADDRESSED TO

THAT EXCELLENT MAN.

#### By A. MACLEOD.

"Let reason and let virtue faith maintain,
All force but their's is impious, weak, and vain."

Lord LYTLETON to the Rev. Dr. Ayscough.

#### LONDON:

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My Lord,

than-localing or much expressions to etha-HE deference due to you, and decorum becoming me, are two things, I wish scrupulously to maintain, in the whole course of the examination I propose by the following tract. It is a solemn, difficult, and interesting subject; alike involving man's highest interests in this life, and hopes of immortality in another. In treating of it, moderation and candour have uniformly accompanied your fentiments: your arguments, if not always happily applied, are, generally, fage and perspicuous: purity of style, strength of language, and grandeur of thought, are eminently displayed in your judicious work: your own and furrounding nations must .apitsl

must revere your name. You have set philosophers an example which I am ambitious to imitate; an example not less brilliant, than it is amiable and inviting: I wish I could as readily subscribe to your doctrines! But, curious man, on a subject of such importance, requires even more than soothing or meek expressions to establish his belief. He soars to the summit of history, and, looking back on ages of credulity, marks the progress of intellect and truth.

That man must indeed be well skilled in human science, must thoroughly understand the arts of pleasing and persuading, who shall undertake to convince the judgments and seize the passions of his readers as successfully as your lordship has done. For myself, I have no unwillingness in owning that I write these letters more with a view to receive instruction, on such topics as appear to me obscure or ambiguous, than from any wish to discredit revealation,

duties. Yet if, in the course of religious duties. Yet if, in the course of a sain survey of your book, I should meet with statements in themselves obnoxious to the common sense of nature, nothing can himder me from exploding your mistakes. The detection of error is one of those duties which our situation, as relative social beings, imposes. These duties, being the links of our union, ought never to be distinguished and while we explore mysteries, and examine truth and salshood, we may preserve the fundamental principle unusual

According to you, the author of the "Age of Reason" seems to have mistaken the rights of man; he seems to have for gotten that no individual has a right, either under the positive or relative laws of nature, to untie that affillating knot. That this has, in some measure, been done, by his books on religion, I scruple not to allow. Yet his intentions, like those of men

men fedulous to promote a politically good change, may have been morally good. Between the laws of men and the ordinances of theaven there however can sublift no common connexion. The one class is organized, from the fecondary necessities of life; the other proceeds, as we suppose, from God. When I look around me among the crowds of my fellow men, I behold the laws of nature in motion; when I look into myself, I sigh, and am neither able to account for my thoughts, nor discover their source of being. We come into this world of commixed good and evil, without our knowledge; and, without our knowledge, we must quit it. In this dependent state to be arrogant, were to mistake our true condition; and to boast of underived freedom, a libel on humanity. Life is alone the medium of contemplation and enjoyment, of pleasure and of pain; without the breath to animate, and the pulse to fignalize this breath, we should be, what on the extinction of thefe

these we are, mere clods!—as passive as inert! Thus must our reasoning faculties be subordinate to their primeval cause, and as liable to err in willing as in judging. So formed, we war against our natures, when we petulently affert either the truth or fallacy of abstract principles. Out of the range of his local and personal experience, man really is not qualified to judge either for himself or others, and, even within this pale, may frequently misapprehend the most obvious truths.

Infants at best, our knowledge ever is
Unripe, unsound, precarious, and small.
If we oscape the choler of the womb,
And stem the fury of contending ills,
The murmurs of our kind unnerve and crush
Our utmost energy and strength of mind;
We lose that attick vigour, that high pulse,
That sense of honour, that endearing look,
Which dignisies the common sense of man.
Happier they who yet remain untaught,
Who know nor sign, nor letter in a book,
But run their course unheeding, and unseen.—
They start into existence, and the fates
Rebound them to the grave.

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When,

When, through this medium, we view the distinctions; honours, and preferments of life, how readily do we discover the uncertainty of all! The sentiments thus induced, both alarm and please us; no man, seriously impressed with them, can violate truth. He, indeed, will grow more and more solicitous to know her maxims; and, by being thus employed; our consciousness of self-insufficiency is increased; doubting our own judgments, we question that of others.

In this frame of mind, and only defirous to enhance the prospects of a life of toil, ending in an eternity of retribution, I trust I may now hazard to examine your lordship's portentous Apology.

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Some people have thought, that when, in the first page of your book, you say, "I think it not inconsistent with my station, and the duty I owe to society, to trouble you (Thomas Paine), and the world,

world, with fome observations on so extraordinary a performance," you subject yourfelf to the asperities of the malevolent, and the misconstructions of the designing. The former will perhaps regard such sentiments as the offspring of a professional pride, while the latter profess to believe that they inculcate a superiority in rank and fortune over talents and virtue. Thefe, however, are deductions, which cannot fairly be made from your premises, it being very evident you mean not to dictate, but admonish your author and the world to feriousness and moderation, to temperance and virtue. This has been the object of the best men in their labours, in the worst ages of the world, and it is an object worthy of good men in any age. No man, however elevated his station, however solemn his office, is pardonable in the eyes of men, and furely not to be approved by his God, for an abuse of the advantages of fortune, and the privileges attached to birth. Man, as a revolu-BA tionary

tionary agent, is responsible in every action of his life, not only to his creator, but his fellow-man. The fum of his wealth and of his power is intended by the Deity to be, to fociety, a reciprocal good. And whenever the exigencies of his country demand either, he, by his obligation to fociety, is bound to distribute that fortune, and apply this power; the one to heal the wounds of credit, the other to cherish the budding flate. In a religious view, this likewise is apposite: because that man, whether a bishop or a curate, who possesses the ability to combat, and energy to repel, the annoyers of the peace of christianity, if he remains inactive, is culpable; af he defeats the enemy, praise-worthy. They, indeed, are enemies to the christian world, who can coolly attack the whole body of the evidence on which alone the authority of that religion rests; and that, phly with a view to diffract it's members. This, it is thought, Mr. Paine has done; and that an eulogy, on the coincidence of vinau! natural

natural effects and causes, forms his creed. To detect the errors and expose the sophistry of such men, are duties consistent even with the station of princes, and a part of the duty incumbent on us all.

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Yet I am difinclined to think with you, "that it would have been fortunate for the christian world, had Mr. Paine's life terminated before he had fulfilled his intention." To suppose this would be to acknowledge the incompetence of those documents, from which and in which the christian's faith is established. It would be to acknowledge a total inability in it's members to defend the fystem against the fallies of deifm and the frauds of unbehef to acknowledge, that religion must ultimately fuffer by the investigation of truth! Deifm, it is true, fallies forth, now and then, with luftre; and fymptoms of unbelief are fometimes felt by chriftians themselves. I, however, rejoice that Mr. Paine has been permitted to fulfil his B 5 design

defign against christianity; and why? It is, my lord, because a Bishop of Landass furvives the attack. Truths may suffer malversation in the mouths and from the pens of crasty theorists, but a victory over these is grand, it is sublime. If the deist can be eventually consuted and reclaimed, how elevating the prospect of that tranquillity and those laurels which await the believers in Christ! If he cannot, by fairness of argument, be convicted, we ought, in that case, to glory in the inbred superiority reason ever preserves above the errors and the prejudices of man.

Let it be granted that many, who about fix years ago were fervent christians, are now obstinate unbelievers; that deism has made a progress unparalleled, in so short a period, in this or any other country; that, wavering in their saith and of unsound moral principles, many people have imbibed the poison of irreligion—thus admitting "that Mr. Paine has unsettled the

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the faith of thousands." But, what follows? why! that truth will in the end stamp her precepts on the minds, and bring her conviction home to the feelings, of mankind:—that this conviction and these precepts will impenetrably fix the basis of the triumphant doctrine. But whether this doctrine be that of deism or christianity; whether the one be more confonant to the revealed natural laws of God than the other, I will not here dare to affert: reserving the discussion of those topics for their proper places, in the more advanced stages of this examination.

Your lordship seems to think "The Age of Reason" has rooted from the minds of "the unbappy virtuous all their comfortable assurance of a future recompence." And I must express, in return, how much I regret your, likewise seeming, misapprehension of the true character of virtue. Who does not know, that genuine virtue will produce perfect happiness, and B 6

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that an appearance of happiness is no proof of virtue? Whoever is really virtuous, must possess conscious serenity of soul, and this ferenity is a source of happiness. I really know no phrase more ungratefully perplexing than this of your lordship—What! unhappy and yet virtuous?—can such things be? can such things exist in a country and among a people loud in the cause of Jesus of Nazareth? That they do, is but too obvious!

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her votaries profcribed; her pedigree transversed; and the whole order of moral good disorganized: while the slaves of passion, the pimps of lust, and creatures of corruption, speak treason from their losty places: while christians riot in the vices of pagan Rome! Finding this the case, I wonder not that some have spurned the priest-crast, and their sedate professions of charity. Is it charitable, is it holy, is it just, that the virtues of one man

man should be made the sport of multitudes? Is it just that individuals, who never ferved their country in any known honourable capacity, should be titled, and honoured, and preferred, while there yet are to be found "the unhappy virtuous?" I own I have already faid that the man who is virtuous must be happy, and for this additional reason—that there can be no real happiness where there is no virtue. The upright and virtuous are frequently oppressed, and to fuch, your lordship, in those words, may have probably alluded. But you surprise me when you add, "their comfortable affurance of a funire recompence," fince he who is comfortable cannot help being contented. Had this been a comfortable affurance, it, in itself, would have contained the feeds of a distributive, if not permanent, good: and the man who is thus comfortable must be Leaving the phase happy. कार है है के कि है कि स्वर्ध के किस है कि कि

You will perhaps wonder why I thus contend for these distinctions. Only because I am ever zealous to recommend virtue, and her paths, as the fure guide and high-way to heaven. I would not have her embarrassed with the chains or the errors of popery; nor can I highly applaud the degree of effeem in which fome less objectionable characters have held her precepts. Recollecting her banishment in the person of an Atterbury, one is anxious lest the tide should, in this more catholic æra, turn against the enemies of Gallic freedom, and urge it's furies from shore to shore. I am, above all, anxious lest yourself should hereaster be arraigned on the innocene of your worthy character. But this folicitude is no obstacle to my furvey of what feems to me to be your errors as an author.

Certainly the phrase "unhappy virtuous" appears to be, either ill conceived, and, therefore, unlogical; or ungenerous, and

and, therefore, inhumane. To suppose the first, would derogate from that veneration I entertain for you, both as a philosopher and a scholar: and the last is no characteristic of either. You indeed may think I have inveighed against expressions every way incapable of the application thus made, urging at the same time that they are epithets which can eafily be reconciled to existing circumstances, because many virtuous men are by tyranny rendered unhappy. But the admission of this truth positively criminates the christian world! It proves that many virtuous individuals are more oppressed than the vicious invaders of focial peace—that a scoundrel in principle may administer laws: nor is it less an avowal of the instability of christian comforts. It is an avowal of the uncertainty of faith, acknowledging at the fame time a want of moral and religious evidence to recommend that faith. you we are indeed told, that Thomas Paine's observations have rooted every religious

ligious hope from the christian's mind. Now Mr. Paine, and those who think with him, may contend, that, had the religion of Jesus been an heavenly ordination, no human influence could ever root, nay, not even stagger, the christian's belief. As immutable as God himfelf would the doctrines of Jefus be\_then, now, and ever !nor had this immutability been confined to the religious axioms of that reacher, for his moral precepts would have equally refifted change. And fuch precepts too as should always be not only holy and good in themselves, but have a certain tendency, nay, an unerring influence, to make those who espoused them equally so. A dispenfation from heaven can no more be fubject to the controuling inclinations of men. than the chapter of the universe. Rain, hail, thunder, and every kind of florm, pregnate the clouds, and are difwombed in our hemisphere, altogether independent of our will, although frequently subversive of our comfort. Now it would be as impossible

possible for a man, impressed under divine influence, to erase the laws of heaven from his mind, as to change the nature of those elementary phenomena. There is a real Word of God known to, and selt by us, which is life; and which moves and breathes in every word and in every action: and had the religion of Jesus been the real Word of God, it likewise would move and breathe in every word and in every action.

Confessedly the laws of men can be eluded, and are often suspended: this was the case with respect to those framed and promulgated by Moses: and Jesus Christ lived to behold his opponents exercise functions directly subversive of his laws. Nevertheless Jesus spoke parables, and inculcated religious morality with all that fervour which became a person at once upright in himself, and ambitious to make other men so: but the disobedience of Peter, and apostacy of Judas, seem corroborative

rative of the temporality of Christ's office, mission, and life: they seem to corroborate the fentiments of those who think it is possible to erect any theory, however abfurd, into a practical code—that it is eafy for men, converted only to the opinions of a man, to swerve from conversion, and become rogues. Peter and Judas, differing only in degrees of guilt, answer this description: but had their belief been consequent upon the divine power of Jefus, one should suppose nothing but divine power could have changed their faith. Some christians, willing to get rid of this difficulty, fay, that the devil provoked Peter to deny, and made Judas betray, Christ. In this case the devil must have been superior not only to Jesus, but to God himself, in strength, in wisdom, and in prescience. This the same christians deem impossible. If then Peter and Judas had " all comfortable affurance rooted from their minds," is it not evident that that affurance was the mere declaration 6 1 E

tion of a mere man? Unwilling however to anticipate my precise sentiments concerning Jefus Christ, I shall on this topic just add, that I am humbly of opinion no truly divine truth can possibly be rooted from the human mind: because such truths. can only be impressed by the finger of the Deity, and impressions made by him are immutive. This must be true of himfor wherever he appears in his works, order is apparent; and any change even of the texture of the most minute flower happens, not because man has so contrived it but because the creator willed it should be for How much more above the powers, even of united worlds, to alter one figure, one defign, one law, one truth written, formed, or planned by him, on the minds and in the hearts of men!

Truly it is unwife, it is impolitic, nay unjust for men to attempt war against reafon and her powers; vigilant and fage, she penetrates the mist, and lays, sometimes with

with unsparing hand, the impostor and his crast equally low. Not that I at all rank your lordship with impostors and sools—no—you are much too candid, much too ingenuous for such company. It would, indeed, be criminal to draw the slightest inference between dignisted sincerity and soul dissimulation—between a Watson and a Horseley!

To men like the latter we owe much of that Hotspur persecution which has so blackened the annals of the 17th century: to men like him, the troubles of unhappy France can readily be traced: to men like him the scholar, the artist, the man of genius, may consistently look back as the cause of their united forrows: to men like him, Doctor Priestley might fairly attribute the riots and the perjuries, the slanders and the blasphemies of devoted Birmingham.—From men like him the whole English nation has to receive the palm of slavery. And if the people will

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be passive, and the laws equally accommodating, it is thought, the right reverend father will, in a few weeks, establish an inquisition—to see whether the slaves "know more about the laws, than how to obey them."

hat prejate has done. But he ought to recollect, that although he has twisted himself into a blihopric, he may yet be scoffed from the house of lords. He ought to recollect, that there is no truth better known, than that only a few years fince, he was the zealous defender of that fect, about whose tenets he laterally contended with Doctor Priestley. In this contest he disavows these tenets; nor that, like a man convicted of an error (for fuch, I own, has been the fituation of many illustrious disputants), but in the proud spirit of a place-bunting divine. For these reafons has he been inculpated, for these realons honest men have spurned his name—a contempt which nothing but a reverse of such conduct can ever relax. Truly, such men

men are tyrants at heart, levellers in temper, and have done more towards unreining the passions, and corrupting the morals of their fellow-men, than Mr. Paine could possibly accomplish.

This I am certain that prelate has done. He has impudently questioned the right of a people to examine their own laws; he has libelled the commons of England, and, with the same tongue, traduced the crown. The plain English of his words is\_You members of the house of commons know nothing about the laws: and you, people of England, whole representatives those are, have nothing to do but to obey these laws .- Good God! what horse-like logic !- obey laws you know nothing ofthat is to fay, the laws may be very good or very bad, but they shall not be such as the people can understand; though the people must, nevertheless, strictly adhere to them. In one word—Bishop Horseley com-

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commands me, you, every body elfe, to be quiet:—as we are to have nothing to do but govern ourselves according to certain precepts, which precepts we are never to read, to hear spoken, no—never to know any thing at all about them; except—to be directed by them! This is foul heresy: it is the perfection of blasphemy, of disingenuousness, of pride, and caprice.

Finding men, high in the rank of spiritual honours, thus attempting to diffort and oppress the very sinews of their temporal independence, how am I to think of the hosannas and the prayers weekly, indeed daily, celebrated in the praise of "the Most High?" How am I to judge whether prayers, and hymns, and humbling of hearts, be tricks to impose upon mankind, or insults to the living God? how decide between the scurrility of a Paine, and the juggles of a Horseley?

Much moral evil has been anticipated as necessarily consequent upon the effects to be produced by "The Age of Reason." But does any one imagine this book will cause a riot at Birmingham? Does any one expect religious houses will be pulled down by the deistical readers of this pamphlet? Can a book, consessedly written to remove historical errors, lead to the subversion of all order and of all laws? Is a man, who inculcates the practice of every virtuous duty upon his readers, likely to create a schism in morality? Even his lordship Horseley must answer in the negative.

Yet, what I have already admitted, I still believe—that Mr. Paine's "Ages of Reason" have staggered the hopes of those who live by faith. But this soe to virtue has too long domineered over the minds of men—too long been the source of poverty; and poverty is the soul of vice, vice that of power, and this derives it's efficacy from gold. Gold therefore is the

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current medium of famine, of murder, of homicide, and treason. A medium to which alone we owe that public insecurity which distracts the private state.

It is, I believe, well known that European vice differs from African canibalism only in the degrees of refinement which characterise the one, and the russian paffions which accompany the other: but this refinement may be that of a more fludied system of immorality, while the rude favage openly attacks his kind. Jefus Christ inveighed against the idolatry and the impieties of his country in the fynagogues and upon the tops of the moun-His followers, in the 17th century of his religion; instead of being equally magnanimous, flatter the vices of man, from the pulpit and in the senate. So it is, and so it has been, ever fince the days of the apostle Paul. Hence, and not in

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consequence of atheistical or deistical writings, have mankind experienced the ravages of tyranny and the inselicity of sin. Hence it was that the church of Rome and her members derived security in the career of their inquisitorial rapine. Hence, European virtue could be bought and sold, long before Mr. Paine wrote his book.

The morals of mankind, depraved and unfocial, have for years libelled their belief, whether in a God or in a Christ. For years, they have yoked the trammels of popes in Italy, cardinals in France, emperors in Germany; and Great Britain has exercised proportional degrees of power, to establish refinements of error, and fix the maxim of vice among her sons. Thus had the Age of Reason never been written, had the French revolution never happened, had things continued in their improving state, an appearance of virtue would, at this day, alone signalize the annals of Europe, I demand to know whether the

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Age of Reason, written in the year 1795 of the christian religion, was the cause of Henry the 8th's and Cardinal Wolfey's religious peculations, treasons, herefy, and murders; of all the crimes jointly committed by them and their factions in the year 1536, likewise of the christian religion? I demand to know whether the maffacres at Saint Bartholomew; the roaftings of innocent men, women, and speechless infants, by Queen Mary, in Smithfield, and other places, was caused by the Age of Reason? I demand to know whether that book was the cause of the riots in the year 1780? whether, in short, the heir apparent of these realms had his morals corrupted by the Age of Reason? If these, if a thousand such, and as horrid instances of the baneful dominion of passion or folly are to be found in our history, if they are to be met with in our land, what shall your lordship think of your acculation against Paine and his book?

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### LETTER II.

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MEN, my lord, fundamentally proceed from one error to another, whether they have books to guide them to evil, or precepts to divert their paths. Yet man is a reasonable being, and capable of high attainments. He is exclusively gifted with the faculty of dividing, connecting, and pronouncing sounds: differing from all other animals in that he has an articulative membrane, which easily represents his ideas of himself, of his specie, and of the world he inhabits. Nevertheless man is that depraved animal. Now, my lord, what think you of all these things?—You will, it is probable, as-cribe the whole to the fall of Adam. I

do not: and for which you shall have my reasons by and by.—In this place I think it sufficient to say, that the sum of moral evil has been increased by the agency of mental error; that it is increasing, under the pressure of arrogant distinctions; and can only be diminished, by an entire decomposition of the operating functions of the legislative body.

So fituated, an hasty, scurrilous, but plain attack, such as (you say) Thomas Paine's book against religion is, could not fail to warp the debauched to absolute profligacy, and men already unfettled in their creed readily embrace the religion leaft irksome to them. This is that which fcorns to humble it's votaries at any altar, and knows no divine monitor but nature. Undoubtedly fuch religion pleases the idle, suits the vagrant, is charming in the eyes of robbers, and has a politive tendency to fubvert truth. But although Paine's book be much interlarded with fcur-C 3 

fcurrility, and fometimes tinged by obfcenenels, the main fcope of the author apparently is what I have already statedto inculcate the practice of every virtuous duty upon his readers. The removal of error and destruction of tyranny ere his favourite pursuits; and he thinks, and so have upright men ever thought, that both tyrants and impostors have found their highest authority consist in the language and the examples of their antitypes in the Old Testament. Aware of this, he boldly attacks the whole body of revealed religione and if I have not mistaken your lordship, this attack is a most potent one. His friends fay, that the Age of Reason, part the fecond, concludes with an inveftigation of the various reasons for believing the doctrine of the foul's immortality, inculcating at the fame time the natural propriety of man's believing in a state of future existence. Now if such be his fentiments, has he not been endeavouring to fix, not root, the hope of future re-

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compence? Has he not been labouring to make refurrection from the dead, a reafonable, plain, intelligent doctrine? My lord, I have not read the book I thus allude to s nor shall I, till after my examination of your's. However it is altogether liberal in me here to fay, that if Thos mas Paine has fo written, Robert Watfon has not done what it would feem his duty to do. Be this as it may, I shall follow your lordship in your objections, and take for granted that they are proper and confiftents their between the wholes were the

In this way then I shall freely grant that Mr. Paine has not only unfairly, but injudiciously attacked established opinions; that he has shaken the main anchor of fome men's hopes; that the ground under them begins to quake, that religion, that awful though partial bower, is threatened with decay! But, what then? He merely has proclaimed the war of intellect against error, while Bishop Horfeley =months

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has waged that of proud superstition against humble truth. Your lordship may probably regret the frequency of my allufions to this prelate. I really cannot avoid it; for his character is so complete in one way, that no parallel can better fuit, than that of virtue in others on the one hand, and vice in him on the other. Far from dignifying his profession, he is continually traducing whatever is facred in religion? and good in morals. My ford, Indo not write against this man for the sake of those he has already perfecuted, but in the cause of the many he is now endeavouring to enflave. Had he confined himself to his theological speculations, no one would have thought his bickerings worthy of public notice; but now that he criminally invades the best privileges of a nation, every one must be folicitous to defeat his projected In this viewship character is of importance to the cause you have volunteered to defend, and therefore it is, that Lintroduce him on every convenient oca esd cafion.

cafion. His disputes about the "Godbead " of Jefus Chrift, were introductory to'a difference of opinion, and gave rife. to doubts concerning the authenticity of. the New Testament. This difference of opinion, increasing with the circulation of his writing, likewife occasioned much posthumous reflection; and it is probable Thomas Paine himfelf was brought to contemplate the subject originally, by perufing the anathemas of that day. However this may be, it is well known that the conflicts of that period led many people to think christianity had the appearance of a pageant mockery; imagining that miracles and prophelying were not wanting to illustrate precepts long before known in the world. Nor were these uninteresting speculations. For doubtless the whole of Chail's precepts, nay, his laws, can be traced to fources, and reft on authorities entirely montal. In the courfe of thus tracing them, weishall moreover find that those who were most zealous 9 19 in

in their propagation, like Jesus, generally experienced contumely, and, in particular instances, death. Confucius gave the fame, with many more wife laws, to the Chinese people, as Jesus Christ administered to the jews. But Confucius was fometimes persecuted, and often insulted, by his bigot countrymen. Nor was Solon, whose wisdom was the pillar of law and liberty in Athens, and his found morality the rein of every passion, exempt from the anxiety usually impelled by the daring fallies of difappointed and worthless men. It is true, he died peaceably. Yet his life was an almost continued feries of warfare against vice, of opposition to tyrants, of virtueus refignation to the frowns of mankind. Hence his laws and his precepts were in his life-time often despifed, sometimes neglected, and are now only retained in the mixtures of human science. Again, Socrates, who lived merely for his country, and fought nothing so much as it's happiness, could not escape the

the bitter acculations of cotemporary zerlots. The excellence of bis laws, the foundness of his morals, even his abfiract speculations, were the continued themes of their lewd invectives. In thort, he was facrificed to their fury, and fell a victim to his love of virtue. Yet the Athenians erected statues, and built temples, in honour of this man. The christians. on the other hand, have written certain books prospective of the life, conduct, and death of their adopted faviour. - Now, my lord, wherein do the ancients differ from the moderns? We know that those ancients were not less wife, and certainly more learned, than Jesus Christ. They too had affociates, pupils, followers, and disciples, who were emulous to equal them in wisdom, in virtue, in austerity, and continence. But fo were not the subsequent followers of these followers, and so are not the christians of our day. Wherefore, I repeat, that the rein was long fince given to the domination of every passion, C 6 Thopredence.

Thomas Paine having contributed but a priest mite to "the public insecurity and private unhappiness, which usually and almost necessarily accompany a state of confupted morals."

from your lordship. Like you, I cannot acquit the priests of all the charges Paine and other writers have exhibited against them. For to them, and the still-continued influence of popery, that corruption, "that public infecurity, and private unhappiness," owe much of their virulence; from them, and from those principles, have emanated the prejudices and the vices which have so long actuated the conduct, and distinguished the actions of men.

Yet the maxims of the christian religion are fundamentally good, hence the injustice of attaching to these maxims the blame of the effects produced by that imprudence,

continues. Her lo were not the folia-

prudence, that fanaticism, that impiety, which differences Rome, and appears to be not a little predominant in protestant countries. In effect, the quackery of priestcraft is still retained in our English liturgy; which mingles, as a matter. of courfe, with our morning and evening prayers. Hence, alone, that triumphal fecurity Horseley enjoys, in the career of his apostate glory. Hence that triumphal fecurity wicked and corrupt ministers of flate find, in the fawnings and the careffes of an expectant clergy. However, we live in a more tolerant country than Italy, and enjoy advantages proportionably high. There, indeed, every fort of crime, whether against God or against man, may be committed, under the papal dispensation, with impunity. I fay with impunity, because confession to a priest and subsequent absolution, are the only facrifices thieves, murderers, and robbers, are at all required to make. To justice no atonement whatever is at any time made! Infomuch

Infomuch that a man may kill his father, lie with his mother, debauch his fifter, and fixangle his wife, if he can pay the pope's tax on each and all of these crimes. And this, my lord, is "shoroughly believing that religion."

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Ask the papist why he believes in tranfubfiantiation and purgatory, he will directly reply, " So fay the scriptures:" revert to the protestant, you are instantly told, " The errors of the church of Rome are no where fanctioned in the Bible." The numerous fects which divide protestant diffenters, in our own and other countries, likewife vindicate their particular forms, end take, as they fay, their authority from the Word of God: fo that whether Socinian or Arminian, whether the followers of Luther, or those of Calvin, nay pagans, may, now and then, be accommodated with a text of feripture to accredit their belief. Do we wonder, then, that Voltaires have appeared in the middle rationariole! of

of christian countries? Do we wonder that the acute Thomas Paine glories in being a wood-cutter in our religious forest? We may be furprifed, but we have little to fay in praise of our confistency.

Notwithstanding this, I am far from approving of the whole of Mr. Paine's conduct and fentiments. That I do not, may easily be collected from what is here said concerning the fundamental excellence of the christian scheme. And how much soever I reprobate the popes, those foes to virtue, those sacred pillagers of industry, those scourges of reason and truth, I cannot, with Mr. Paine, fairly implicate the church of Rome in the issues of a revolution, which has deluged France with blood. That the French nation was, till lately, much oppressed, by an huge establishment of regular priests, by itinerant and fecular jobbers in absolutions, by a profligate nobility, and vain court, is acknowledged even by the advocates of the pro-

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proferibed house of Bourbon. In such a situation no country could be safe from intriguers, from wantons, from speculists, and madmen. These then did riot in the days of national adversity; they sacrificed the innocence of virtue to their lust of power.

But fuch ravages are attendant as well upon great and fudden political changes, as on those of a religious kind. A revolution in England would be attended with fimilar, perhaps worfe, confequences: nor that fo much because there are differences of opinion about religious matters held among us, but because revolutions are the offspring of madmen. They generate anarchy, and convulse and deftroy the peace of empires! I am, therefore, always unwilling to suppose christianity, in it's effence, is the cause of revolution and tumult; but I do believe revolution and tumult might be constrained by the real and genuine maxims thereby inculcated? Not--017 withstanding

withstanding this, both princes and people have, before now, not only misapplied but subverted these maxims. Even Luther and Calvin, though the principal authors of the reformation, though zealous in the detection of error, though apparently fincere in their devotional humiliations, conspired against and violated truth. The former merely wished to be made a cardinal; the latter had fixed his hopes on the religious supremacy of the state of Geneva. To attain this, he procured the expulsion of Castalio, and perfecuted Servetus to the grave. Luther, on the other hand, facrificed the princess of Saxony to a luftful hufband, and made the ignorant pealants of Germany believe that the devil, in person, had commissioned him to superfede private masses. Yet the crimes of these zealots cannot fairly be imputed to the cause in which they had engaged. As well, indeed, might the incests of pope Julius II. be attributed to Jesus Christ. As well might it now be faid. faid, that Alfred the Great is culpable for the crimes of William Pitt.

or the base of their continues. Here La-

It is the abuse of christianity, joined to the avarice of power, which causes that immorality, and produces those crimes so certainly inimical to the peace of nations, and the laws of God. bondloor renonal track. "The tortuer merely willed to be made a cardinal rithe latter had thad his ropes on the following to an many of the thie of General. To another this the proregulation of Latello, and person in order lecated Servicions to the prove. "Lither, on the prince band. Gerinerd the orine all mo of Example to a hunting modernia, and conde contribution of the contri Benefit intros bot to very branche series office furthering arriving about the very we also double the its capital to see a bill 4503 no da na como mas de balagina and entitioning choosing the establishment or conscious eq. The construction LET-

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## LETTER III.

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HE innovations of every new feet are attended with new distortions of the christian religion; or, if at any time these happen to be desective, the concesfions of disputants yield an ample supply. In your lordship's remarks on your own question, "What is conscience?" you have conceded more than the deift could have expected, and a great deal more than fome christians can approve of. Christians there are, who deem the death-bed affeverations of their teachers, unanswerable anguments in favour of their adopted tenets. An unitarian, for instance, requires no better proof of the superior excellence of his creed, than such a dying evidence; trinitatrinitarians, again, triumph in the last breath zeal of their doctors. But your lordship is of opinion, there are conscientions errors.

That confeience is nothing but the faculty of discriminating between what, according to our own judgments, we think right and what wrong, has long fince been acknowledged by one party, and denied by another. John Locke held the notion of It's being this differiminating faculty, and you tell us you have likewife adopted it! Against this it has been, I think improperly, argued, that when in the New Teffament we are told the foul of man is the temple of the Holy Ghoff, we are to infer, that the foul of man is the confcience of man. But this will not do. We are neither told what fort of thing the Holy Ghoft is, nor has it yet been afcertained whether the foul bean imaginaryentity, or a real fomething. Hence the apparent incongruity of those who have, in that urinita-

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way, urged the non-adoption of Mr. Locke's opinion.

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It is true, much objection might be made to an opinion of such a nature, particularly as it came from such a person at fuch a time. Locke, long before he had published the work where the opinion is found, had denied the innateity of ideas. This necessarily involved him in metaphyfical disputation, in the course of which, it evidently appeared he wavered in his belief in the Deity. His not admitting that ideas are innate, gave those waverings an air of atheism; his opinions concerning conscience were therefore deemed unfound. But time has shewn that he not only firmly believed in one God, but that his opinions were generally as right as fage. However, his belief, according to your lordship's history of the progress of conscience, may have been founded on an error. Wherefore the christian world need no longer boast of the testimonies of a Locke.

Locke, or a Newton. But conscience may not be that discriminating faculty contended for by Locke, and approved by you. Of this one word.

It has never yet been denied, that the animal man is naturally more rational than the animal borfe; or, if denied by fceptic theorists, the reflecting portion of the liberal part of our race have fully vindicated the affertion. If then a man is naturally more rational than a horse, man must by nature possess some intellectual faculty, which, in the course of time, is to diffinguish his actions, and place him in a rank and among an order of beings fuperior to a horse. This natural, or, for fuch it is, innate faculty, is derived from some creative cause; but how derived, it is impossible rightly to fay. That man does enjoy fuch a faculty, and that it is a derived one, must be however conceded: it is the fountain of the fenses, and without it the human fystem would be a chao-

tic, Tenfeless mass: this then argues, that the principle of reason is the principle of life: it argues that the reasoning faculty is as much superior to the senses, as these are superior to the groffer organs: yet all infeparably necessary to the existence of the whole. One might venture farther, and fay, that without this faculty freason the Deity could not exist: that it is the effence of his being: that without it's aid he could not have made man. Hence, therefore, reason is the noblest attribute of the Deity; alone his image; and therefore alone likely to be his monitor in the breafts of men. Now, may not this monitor be conscience?

I have often thought that, were an infant taken from fociety, and not permitted to converse with any of his kind till he arrived at the age of manhood, he would, in his abstraction, conceive clear notions of the existence of one intelligent creator: were this to happen, the conception would be a demonstration, both of the existence of such a being, and of the existence of such a monitor as confcience: because he could only have conceptions of simple ideas, and of actual truths; nor of these, but by his reasoning faculty; which, as being the express oracle of God in his mind, could not err.—But this is merely a thought of mine; and, like myself, may be impersect.

the gid she could take have made man.

When, however, I am hereafter asked, "What is conscience?" I think I may safely answer: The murders committed by king David: the debaucheries of king Solomon: the prevarications of Samuel: the extortions of Moses: and the sorceries of the witch of Endor: or, if not these, you have the actions of Luther, Calvin, Wolsey, Bonner, and Horseley, among the spiritualists: and examples of more than a thousand different vices now deisied in this country, by lay nobles. Ergo-the conscience of a man is a nasty puddle

of rotten thoughts and bad wishes, and evil designs and water to a standard of the last to no notice?

But, is the Bible the Word of God ?

would be of no use without the life of

On this subject, yourself and Thomas Paine have written a great deal , the one with a view to prove, the other to difprove the authenticity of the books contained in the Old and New Testament. Baine affumes for an opinion, that it is of no consequence to mankind, or his argument; whether certain books in the Old Teffament were written by the persons whose names they bear or not. You, on the other hand, contend, that if one of those books should be found unauthentic, the whole of the christian religion must be false. Now, I beg leave to alk your lordship, whether that grand maxim --- Do unto others as you would that others fliould do unto you--- fo often, but variously recommended in the New Testament, would fail to be valuable, if the books of the Old them Testament.

Testament, or any of them, should prove unauthentic. I ask you, whether Christ's fermon on the mount, the letters of Paul, the morality of Peter, Jude, and others, would be of no use without the life of David, Solomon, and others?-Really, I think your lordship's affertion more remarkable for the zeal it expresses, than it's foundness, fairness, or aptness. What if, in your own book, we should happen to meet with concessions which nearly amount to a corroboration of Paine's doubts? What if, in your own book, we should discover enough to make it appear to any one, that the Bible is not the Word of God? You will be surprised .- Well then ...

How comes it to pals, that you confider God infinitely powerful, good, and wife, and yet acknowledge, that he permitted himself to be interrogated, frowned at, and dictated to by Moses and his people? How comes it to pass, that, after repeated efforts to reclaim the Israelites, and make them

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them a " peculiar people, zealous in good works," the Ifraelites continued not the fame, but grew a worse set of theives, murderers, and robbers? A man of any philanthropy will fay, that God, to permit fuch impieties, and yet to possess such power, must have infinitely delighted in the miseries and the crimes of a devoted nation. But to the point-

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Your lordship tells Paine, "Lest they (his readers) should suspect that all ancient authors are in your favour, I will venture to affirm, that had you made a learned appeal to all the ancient books in the world, facred or profane, christian, jewish, or pagan, instead of lessening, they would have established, the credit and authority of the Bible as the Word of God." In this statement I see much to disavow, much to afcribe to your usual zeal and christian fervour.

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If profane writers, who, in the spirit and meaning of the phrase, are unhallowed, unholy, ungodly writers, add to the credit and authority of the Bible as the Word of God, it must be in an unhallowed, unholy, and ungodly manner. you cannot mean the profane writers: the facred writers alone answer your purpose: and even thefe, according to the definition you have given of "conscience," may have been in an error. What means "facred writers?" I might answer two ways. 1st. They were those persons who wrote the books of the Old Testament: 2nd. They are those who, at any time, write truth. Now the writers of the former class wrote, sometimes ambiguously, sometimes absurdly, and sometimes in a pasfion: confequently were no more facred and holy than other men, and confequently as liable to be misled by their passions. But you will reply, that the idolatries, that the blasphemies of profane writers, add to the credit and authority of the Bible

ble-that among the Persians there lived one Zoroaster, who taught the doctrine of deism, and gave good leffons in morality, but was withal a dealer in magic. It is granted that fuch things did once happen, and that such a man as Zoroafter did once exist. But what shall an unprejudiced mind think of the patriarchal facrifices? what think when he finds it represented by all the prophets, that when the priefts offered no facrifices to God, God was wroth; and that when offered, his anger was fometimes extreme? And this only because the bull or the ox, the sheep or the calf, was not fat or tender enough? However, your lordship, in order to prove the authenticity of a book, confessedly written by idolaters, refers Paine and your readers to other books, likewife confessedly written by idolaters .- But if you even appeal to all the ancient books yet known to the moderns, fuch and fuch only must be the ultimatum.

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The Word of God," your lordship fays, " is in perfect harmony with his works." I have ever thought fo. In thinking thus I have likewise been able to reconcile the destruction of the Canaanites by the Israelites, the swallowing up of Korah, Dathan, Abiram, &c. and of the inhabitants of Catania, Lima, and Lifbon, to the moral justice of God. But in a different manner from your lordship. the hot true of truling had been o

When this planet emerged from it's chaotic origin, certain laws were necessarily made; fome for the regulation of it's inert parts, and fome for the subordination and fustenance of the animal economy. These laws were those of motion, of life, of strength, of contrivance, and execution. The laws of motion appointed the spheres proper for every body to move in; those of life, gave these energy; to these strength was a necessary consequence; and contrivance and execution were next prompted; the one by objects and the

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of fight, the other by those of the senses. This being one section of the general economy, free will, or a right to choose, adopt, and use certain articles of food; modes of drefs, and fources of pleasure, naturally followed as the gift of God. Now the agency of this freedom to will, produced a freedom in action: and although the Deity might know every part of man's destination, -how he should act upon, and how quit the stage of life, -he would not know any thing about either. For to know that a man's present action shall terminate with the gallows, and yet to know how to prevent his performing it, would imply injustice even in a man: how much more fo in God Almighty, could we suppose him capable of such cruelty! But God left man to the freedom of his own will: implying that God endowed man with certain faculties, to be used or abused as men might think proper. This must be the language of all who admit the freedom to will and to act: it is the lan-

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guage your lordship has held. Then, how, reasonably suspect, that God commanded the Ifraelites to deftroy the Canamites for being guilty only of crimes, in which the Ifraelites excelled them? I bloth for the men called ministers of the gofpel ! But what shall be thought of Moses, who evidently contrived the story related of Noah and his fons, in the 9th chapter of Genefis, from the 20th to the 25th verfe, 45 And Noah began to be an hulbandman, and he planted a vineyard; and he drank of the wine, and was drunken, and he was uncovered within his vent; And Ham, the father of Canaan, faw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without. And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father, and their faces were backward, and they faw not their father's nakedness. And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger fon had done unto him. And he faid, Curfed DMALLE

Curfed be Cansan, a fervant of fervants shall be be to bis bretbren." Ah, base man; were those then thy words; or are they these of a law-giving zealet? If thine, inchrious Noah, didst theu now approach my closet, I should, unblushingly, exclaim, " Curfed be Noah, or the man who after him should thus criminate the levity of a well-meaning child!" But, my lord, I neither believe that Noah faid, nor that his children did, as is represented; the probability is, that Mofes introduced this episode to heighten the antiquity of that hatred he himself entertained towards the Canaanites. Having the authority of the flood-maker, and his fons, to corroborate his own and that of Aaron, Moses easily persuaded the Israelites, that a land flowing with milk and honey was better than a defart; and to possess himself of this rich tract, he issued denunciations against the vices of an industrious race of good and bad men. To qualify his fiat, he, however, found he must contrive a D 5 divine

divine law, and make God an instrument in the malfacres and the plunders of a vagabond banditti. According to the words put into the mouth of Noah, Canaan had offended in the person of Ham: and this offence, which we are told confifted in Ham's acquainting his brethren with bis father's drunkenness, could only be remunerated in the total destruction of that people. That the Deity never gave fuch a command, may at once be inferred from the state and organization of his natural laws. When I contemplate what of these I am acquainted with, the Noahetic vifion refumes the air of a neat impossure: an imposture which Moses, or whoever it was that commanded the marauding Ifraelites, introduced merely with a view to impel thefe, his followers, to wage war against an unoffending nation. At any rate it does not appear that the Deity gave a law of that nature to Moles; indeed, it is impossible that the actions of a set of men, not more heinous than their foes, should

should incur the displeasure of a just God. I own Canaan may have been destroyed, but not in the manner, nor by the means, described in the Bible. Probably it's destruction was not more general, nor more violent, than that of the city of London, during the fire of 1666: nor is the one more abhorrent from God's moral justice, than the other. On my hypothelis-that man is a free agent—both those catastrophes are, in fact, congenial to the dignity and the justice of a merciful creator. They display the independence of nature; she being as much a free agent as man. But these speculations; rather these, as I esteem them, just conclusions, were not fought after by the Bible writers. They heard it faid, or Moses, who perhaps could not write his own name, told them, that the Canaanites were destroyed by the Israelites. This was enough, for they would immediately conclude, that God, whom they always exhibit in the character of almoner to Moses; had so ordered it. But does D 6 this

this leave a doubt about the incoherence of an affertion to totally vague and uncharacteristic; an affertion as unfounded in truth, as it is derogatory of the goodness and the supremacy of almighty God?

There is another point, in which this subject has been differently viewed, and that the only "firong-hold" which certain commentators of Paine's writings feem anxious to pollefs. Gilbert Wakefield does not, it is true, affect to fortify himself, by skulking behind it, for he, modest and ingenious man! prefers scurrility to argument; and rather emulates than abhors the coarse invectives of his author. The point I allude to is, the alledged covenant between the Deity and Abram, alias Abraham, and his posterity. In this covenant we find, the possessions of Canaan dexteroully included. Without attempting to flew the morality or immorality of Abram's life, I shall here just fuggest, that I cannot believe the Deity, had til.

had he ever been accustomed to colloquial intercourfes, would have felected Abram to be his evidence among the nations. But, supposing the covenant to have had existence, it only follows, that the attack of the Ifraelites upon Canaan was made merely to decide a question of human policy-Whether Abraham's descendants, by right of primogeniture, should, or should not, invade and possess a country, which was held by a different people, by right of prescription? To adjust this difference, Moses, after his return from exile, proclaimed a decree, which he did not hefitate to iffue in the name of "the Lord." This decree commanded the Ifraelites to pass over Jordan into the land of Canaan, and here destroy all the inhabitants, their pictures, &c. Always ambitious to inhabit this land of plenty, and being an itinerant, unprincipled fet, the Israelites readily obeyed their chieftain. It is not. however, faid, that a regular flege or pitched battles enfued, but only that the **Ifraelites** 

Ifraelites did take possession of all the lands and houses the Canaanites occupied. What massacres, incests, adulteries, rapes, thefts, and blasphemies followed this victory, we are not told; but that thefe always concomitant tokens of "divine authority" fignalized the event, is what we must of necessity infer; indeed, the Israelites could perform no godly action without previous violations of truth. Yet thefe were the chosen people, these the parties in that heavenly covenant. You, it is true, endeavour to reconcile the whole to God's moral justice, but on this topic I have already given my fentiments. I can believe that the Canaanites were defroyed, but I never will believe that their dellruction was by the appointment of an almighty God.

In your retrospect of the fate of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, I, however, discover an ingenious cluster of parallel lines, which you have industriously spun from the the distant seenery of Catania, Lima, and Lisbon. Of these then one word.

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The recorders of the fate of Catania, Lima, and Lifbon, have not faid one word about their being places devoted to vice, and therefore doomed to destruction by God. But I am certain, from a view of man and fociety, that the inhabitants of these towns were as much immerfed in fin, as those of Canaan. Had any proud mahomedan, but particularly that prophet himself, been at war with the Italians at the time those places disappeared, the mahomedans would have fet it down in the Koran as a miracle performed by Mahomed by the express command of God: the people of Constantinople would have believed it, and the whole would be confidered by the Ottoman empire (a more extensive and populous domain, than even all the kingdoms and empires in christendom,) as perfectly true. But would it be any the truer for their fo believing it?\_\_ Not

Not at all:-nor does the swallowing up of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, with their wives, their fons, and their little ones, involve the express command of God, any more than that of Catania, Lima, and Lisbon: even Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, with their families, might have been in their passage from one village to another, at a time when a fand bank shifted; if so, they must of course be swallowed up. In the deferts of Arabia, nothing is more common at this day; than catastrophes of this kind-perhaps the Arabians afcribe these disasters to the wrath of the Gods! In all this, we, however, discover no want of God's moral justice. The world is now created, has certain inhabitants, exists for certain reasons, and is transformed in any of it's parts, according to the disposition and organization of the whole. Nor does the fwallowing up of the persons alluded to in the Old Testament, appear to have followed any express and supernatural decree. It was a physical Nec

agents.

In the reign of the Stuarts, a plot was discovered, which had for it's object the destruction of James the Second, and his parliament. This plot has, and perhaps justly, been traced to the Roman catholics of that day. From them it is fupposed it took it's origin. Now I ask, whether, had they succeeded, and told their fanatic followers that the burning of the parliament-house, king James, and the members, was by the express command of God, these fanatics would not have believed them? Most undoubtedty they would; and so had all the priests who followed them, had all been Roman catholics. So that the fwallowing up of Korah and Abiram, is not more remarkable, than the popilh plot might have proved. And we may conclude further, that whenever it is the interest of the generality to senounce, or believe, a doctrine, thei

their influence can always effect either: and their continuance in their new faith, shall only be so long as that faith is the most congenial with their interests. Nothing but the immunities, a misconstruction of Jefus's moral and religious maxims has produced, could have made his scheme acceptable. For he himself inculcated fobriety, humblenefs, justice, mercy, and humanity. His followers have, on the other hand, been drunken, proud, unjust, unmerciful, eruel zealots. I proteft, I believe vices, the most torpid of vices, alone support the modern fabrics of christianity. I except your lordship and a few others.

But the truth is so notorious, that I am in no danger of being mistaken. Only a very sew indeed can be rightly excepted. England, but especially London, is now what Canaan once was—"The vices of the inhabitants are so abominable, that the very land is sick of them, and will be forced

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to vomit them forth, as the stomach disgorges a deadly poison." Yes! the island of Great Britain must vomit forth it's leviathans of apostacy, of prodigality, and of rapine, before the due atonement is made to justice. Then men will not be tempted to renounce their faith for a vicarage, nor shall our streets be nauseated with the "bad smells" of ragged curates.

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## LETTER IV.

TATHY wonder, my lord, that man, " in the birth and infancy of his fpecies," had no conceptions of " one, eternal, invisible, incorporeal, infinitely wife, powerful, and good God?" for, in this more-refined æra, those are compound ideas; and that too of terms which are fometimes fynonimous, fometimes ambiguous, and may all be false. How shall one conceive that an invisible being is any being? or can you have any idea-of what is not, was not, and cannot, be visible to your fenses? To receive either a perfect or imperfect idea of some body, subject, action, or thing, the mind must be presented with the figure of some body, the nature of some subject, action, or thing. An invisible

invisible being is a doubtful being. To conceive any idea at all of God, I must previously admit that there is a first cause; that the first cause is superior to the consequent effects. God therefore is superior to all things; existing every where; is the creator of all things, and confequently older than all things; and if the things he has created should bespeak, to my fenses, a wife ingenuity, I must likewise entertain an idea of his wisdom, and so on. But these ideas are the compounds of the primitive simple idea --- that there is a first cause--- for, from this idea arises that of creator, &c. The statement made by you, is also a string of compound ideas; and therefore it is not probable a rude favage should have any conception of them so compounded. But, certainly, some rude favage there was, who did, at first, conceive some simple idea of the Deity, or no idea of fuch a being would ever have been known. But your lordship will reply, "The knowledge of the Deity was

communicated by the Deity to the patriarchs, from them to the antediluvians, and from these to us." Now this being even-granted, there still must have been fome rude ignorant, to whom this communication was originally made: at any rate, the most early notions of the Deity must have been entertained, by means of simple ideas prepossessed. Indeed, your lordship, by excluding "the man of rude antiquity" from any participation of the knowledge of "one, eternal, &c. God," proves this fact. However, fuch diffinctions are but mere buman epithets; and owe their origin to that chaos of unintelligibles --- the Athanafian philosophy.

To this, too, one might trace much of that speculative divinity in which the moderns have so freely and so generally dealt: in fact, some of the boldest affertions, which christians have yet hazarded, being emanations from that chaos, are derogatory to the moral persection of God. Of these is this

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one of your lordship's, that—" the history of any one nation throughout all ages, and that of all nations in the same age, are but separate parts of one great plan, which God is carrying on for the moral melioration of mankind."

Then it is for the moral melioration of mankind, that nations are permitted to war against nations; that generations die in their career of vice; that father kills fon! for the moral melioration of mankind, that the examples of those nations, and of these fathers and sons, revolve from, and influence kingdom after kingdom, generation after generation, --- growing worle instead of better--- and threatening, by their progressive and accumulating rage, to make the vast world an entire slaughter house! Truly, my lord, I am astonished that fuch are your fentiments; aftonished, that a man, really learned and really wife, for fuch you confessedly are, should have hazarded any thing to devoid of authority,

fo unlike what philosophy has pronounced truth." But you proceed to fay, that-

God Almighty should have had colloquial intercourse with our first parents."

When we confider the mode in which the terms "almighty, infinite," &c. are ufually applied to God, we, at once, perceive that flrange incoherence, of which practical religion is fo much the vehicle. Your God is, you tell us, of an infinite God;".yet you believe he had colloquial intercourse with Adam. Now, infinity cannot be circumferibed; hence, if God be infinite, he can not be in any one particular place at any one particular time. Had God actually visited the place called, in foriptures," paradife," and there, in person, conversed with Adam, God could not have been every where, nay, no where elfe, at the fame time. In perfon, he must have appeared so Adam in person, he

he must have conversed with Adam; in person he must have delivered his commands to Adam. Confequently God was there personally, and therefore God was no where else personally. Hence God is a finite being. Now it is acknowledged, not only by yourfelf, but by all other writers on the subject, that God is " an infinite being." Since then it has been thewn, first, that an infinite being can not be circumscribed; secondly, that a being who appears personally to any one, is a circumscribed being; and, thirdly, that God, if an infinite being, cannot appear perfonally to any one, in any place, at any time; we infer that God never had colloquial intercourse with Adam and Eve: and, if not with them, he, by the fame necessity, could not have had colloquial intercourse with Moses and the prophets.

Notwithstanding this, your lordship, and those who, with you, are the biographers of the first year of the creation, will

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still assure us that God had colloquial intercourse with your first parents. But shall the plain man, of plain understanding, believe one word of it? No. Especially when the first chapter of Genesis, where alone the authority of the story of colloquial intercourse" is found, has been fairly and impartially examined.—

Genefis, chap, i. ver. 1. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth: and the earth was without form and void."

"In the beginning"—of what? of the world? why not of any thing elfer for certainly the expression, applied even to earth, is ambiguous and inconclusive; and, if meant to relate to heaven, is untrue; heaven being, in other places, spoken of as coeval with God himself: like him, eternal; like him, without beginning; and yet the writer of the book of Genesis tells us, "In the beginning God

God oreated the beaven and the earth:" of these incoherences the reader is left to judge for himself: fince, it is presumed, no prejudice can have so entirely clouded any mind, as to render comments neces-The earth was without form and void. It was impossible to create the earth 'without form and void:', a truth which is fully corroborated in the 7th verse of this chapter, where we read, " And God faid, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear." Now, a selection, or gathering together of the waters, evidently proves that the earth was diffinguishable, and nothing can be distinguish-The earth, ed that is without form. therefore, always, and from the beginning, had it's present certain form; to imagine the contrary, would imply that the earth was not created at the time when that event is spoken of in verse 1; for, whenever a thing is created, it necessarily must have some form. Again, it is said, the

the earth was "void"-how void? Was it an absolute, perfect, and universal vacuum? No. Earth is not capable of fuch a change. WHERE THERE IS A PER-FECT VACUUM, THERE IS NOTHING. Was the earth void of trees and of living creatures? If of thefe, it could not, likewife, be void of flones, metals, and waters: we now live on that same earth on which Adam is supposed to have breathed his first, and lost his last breath. Now the earth is an acknowledged, positive element: but, what are stones? certainly they are component parts of that portion of our planet, which we call earth! stones must have been where earth was, and where they were not, earth could not have been. Wherefore the earth was not void.

Even water must have formed a component part of that, which the author of the book of Genesis calls earth; at any rate the second verse closes with an assertion that "the spirit of God moved upon the the face of the waters." In no part of this preceding verse are we told that God created the waters, nor is it as much as hinted at in the whole sequel of this, or any other chapter of the book of Genesis. If not in Genesis, it is not in any of the other books, because the author of Genesis alone attempts to describe the manner, and account for the cause of the creation of the world. How then came the waters into existence, since we are no where told that they were created? But, neither was the earth void, nor the waters uncreated.

Such proofs as may be deemed sufficient to qualify these last affertions, are, I think, already adduced: it is proved, that whatever is, was created; that this out earth, as a regular planet, was, from the first dawn of it's existence, distinguished by the elements, air, earth, fire, water: that earth is now, was in the beginning, and must always be, in a compound state:

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And God faid, Led there be, light, and

void.

We find things are thus fittiated in our days, and the arcients found them the fame in their's. Inafmuch then as the earth never was 'void;' the book of Genefis contains an affertion which is not, and was not, and cannot be true: confequently the Bible is not the Word of God.

Moreover, we find it is fluted in the 3d, 4th, and 5th verse of this chapter—"And God said, Let there be light, and there was light. And God saw the light that it was good: and God divided the fight from the darkness. And God called the light day, and the darkness he called fight: and the evening and the morning were the first day."

According to this description of the business of the first day, we find that light was

was commanded to arise from chaos: that it was divided from darkness: and this necessary conclusion is made to follow these affertions-" That the evening and the morning were the first day." But strange to observe, that in verse 16, 17, and 18, we also read, " And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the leffer light to rule the night : he made the stars also. And God set them in the sirmament of the heaven, to give light upon earth, and to rule over the day and over the hight, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good." After quoting thefe, is there a man living who possesses one grain of common sense, and but with half an eye in his head, who can withhold his diffent from the book of Genefis as the Word of God? Is there a man living who shall deny that the writer of it has detected himself in the recording of a downright falsehood? What man, who, in verse 3, reads of light being created, and sees it's LOAT in

progress traced from fun-shine to the twilight of the first day, but will consider that the fun and the moon were likewise created the fame day? I am told, Thomas Paine has faid, that " had the fun not been created, there could not have been The writer of the book of Genefis, in a most clumsy manner it is true, endeavours to obviate this difficulty, fince, in verses 16, &c. already quoted, we read, " And God made two great lights, &c." In this, however, we perceive how much the commonly-called facred writer attempts, though vainly, to impose mankind. What but fuch a disposition, what but such an intention, what but disregard of truth, and rebellion against heaven, could have impelled Moles, if it was Moses, or any other writer, to affert that God, the very first day of the creation of this world, created, divided, and distributed, light and darkness; while in the fame chapter, and not twenty lines downwards, we are as folemnly affured, that " God

"God made two great lights, &c." the 4th day of the fame creation. My lord, I could be fatisfied with a much less proof of the fallehood of any writer. But the phenomenon of Cain's marriage is, above all, conclusive, as an evidence against the authenticity of this book. Cain, already devoted to God's perfecuting wrath; " went," as Genefis tells us, "out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden. And Cain knew his wife, &c." By the chronology which the fame writer bas given us of the Adam family, it does not appear that Eve bore any female children. We therefore naturally ask, Whence came Cain's wife? She could not have been the daughter of Adam and Eve; and if not their daughter, according to the paradifiacal creation, she could not be the daughter of any other human parents. In the narrative of the proceedings of the 6th day, there indeed occurs an ambiguous incident, which might lead one to think that blide E 5

that there were two persons..." male and female after their kind"-created on that day; and as it does not appear that the creation of Adam, and subsequent transfiguration of his rib into the woman, Eve, were accomplished till after the 6th day; we might be induced to suppose further, that Adam was not the first of all created human beings. This, were it clearly proved, would at once obviate the difficulty about Cain's marriage; but as it is not likely that the story of the ferpent, Adam, Eve, and the apple, could, on such an hypothesis, be reconciled to the corollary one respecting the introduction of death by fin, the question, Whence came Cain's wife? flill remains unanswered. That Cain was married, and that he knew his wife, are evidently infifted on: now he must have found his wife somewhere, and this wife must have been born somewhere, and wherever the was born, there human beings must have resided; consequently Adam and Eve, who never had a female child,

child, if they were the first, were not the only, perfons whom God created in the origin of our species, It need not be faid that Adam and Eve might have had a daughter, although no mention is made of fuch a circumftance Cain himfelf was their first born, who was followed by Abel: and after the murder of the latter, the former was their only child; nor was it till after Cain's marriage, that Seth was born. Since then Adam and Eve had no female children, Cain could not have married his fifter; whence then, my lord, came Cain's wife? The more we contem+ plate this Bible phenomenon, the more highly must we be incensed against the author of fo wretched a composition as the book of Genefis, An author who, instead of contenting himself with telling one untruth, adds to his guilt by a repetition of his crime. He tells us, that Lamech, Cain's fon, took unto himself "two wives." Wet Cain was the fon of Adam and Ever who never had a female child. caule E 6 and

and who, withal, were the first parents of all human beings. Even Cain docs not feem to have had female children; at any rate his fon's wives, Adah and Zillah, are nor to be found in the lift of his children. This then is a complication of the fame fundamental falfehood - namely, That Adam was the first of our species, Yet even the incoherences of this divine author may be ufefully applied by those who may hereafter effay an examination of the doctrines of original fin. At present I think it unnecessary to enter upon this topic, being fully convinced that man is an indigenous animal-born in all climates, and peculiar to hone toni od ow fings vident sucher of his wretched as composition as

Taving thus investigated that portion of the book of Genesis, even you, yes, your lordship, mast acknowledge that the Bible is not the Word of God.

racity he can neither err in himself, nor

cause those, who receive any truth from his laws, to err. In perfect uniformity with his works, while thefe works exist, his laws never can, and never will, vary in their influence, nor affume new powers. This planet is but a small section of the universal scheme; but this planet was originally formed, though in many of it's parts irregular, a perfect planet. That it shall disappear I am inclined to believe: and it may hence be presumed, that it is a finite body; a-body which received, and does continue to receive, all it's means of existence from God. It may have been formed out of, a chaos, and this chaos may have been the heaped up ruins of another planet; as may the ruins of our earth yet become the fundamental chaos whence another planet shall yet arise. But these are speculations, and I have neither the vanity nor the arrogance to suppose they are either entertaining or just. geng of mointelusiks, who, hever for

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TTAVING proceeded thus far in my examination, I now confider myself fairly at iffue, both with the author of the book of Genefis and your lordship. Of the former, I am authorized, even in this infancy of these strictures, to fay, " You, author of the book of Genefis, whoever you be, feem to me to have written your book in a day, and among a people, when authors were scarce, and the understandings of men, as to the fense and application of the written language, uninformed: when, with regard to literary fagacity, the Israelites might be compared to a gang of mountebanks, who, having got drunk together at a fair, made no distinction

for between brandy and rum; between spruce beer and wine; nay, could be per-suaded to drink laudanum for cyder; for, being drunk, they could take all sorts of shuids in common; examining no object but with a purblind eye." Yes, to such, and such alone, I compare the Israelites of that period; of course, the writer of the book of Genesis was a facred quack.

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Far be it from me, to confider your lordship therefore a quack; no, no, --- I have professed my veneration for your character, and will persevere in it to the end. Of this, I know not how better to give the world a proof, than in confessing that, however your arguments have, to me, the air of zeal more than aptness; of elegant expression, more than sound philosophy; I yet consider those arguments and this zeal, more the effervescence of an awful tenderness for long-received opinions; than that of deliberate ardour in an unworthy cause. Really, I do wish you

you had undertaken, instead of an unwieldy vindication of a contradictory narrative, to write a popular fummary of moral jurisprudence: in a work of this kind, you would have escaped many fallacies of reasoning otherwise inevitable in the Apology before me. Of these is the conclusion you have drawn from the statement in pages 23 and 24, beginning at the 13th line of the former, and continued to the 4th line from the bottom of the latter page: the first affertion in this long ftring I have already cited, (namely, "that God had colloquial intercourse with our first parents,") and I am bold to think my arguments completely refutive on the point: but you proceed to wonder "that he (God Almighty) should have contracted a kind of friendship for the patriarchs, and entered into covenant, with them; that he should have suspended the laws of nature in Egypt; should have been so apparently partial as to become the God and governor of one particular nation; and should have

fo far demeaned himself, as to give to that people a burdensome ritual of worship, statutes, and ordinances, many of which seem to be beneath the dignity of his attention, unimportant and impolitic." Undoubtedly it is said, somewhere in the book of Genesis, that God did contract a friendship for the patriarchs; and we find, in the same book, that he not only entered into covenants with them, but condescended to become their taylor. "Unto Adam also, and to his wife, did the Lord God make coats of skin, and clothed them." To the office of taylor we may now add, that of valet de chambre!

As I am a man, and a believer in the true God, I hold the book where those words are written, namely, the book of Genesis, the 3d chap, and the 11th verse, in utter detestation, and read it only with a view to publish it's vicious errors. What! the God, the creator, the first cause, the governor of intelligent worlds, a taylor!

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my blood runs convultive at the thought of it. What, reader! is your fensation? I feel, exquisitely I feel, for the insulted majesty of truth! With such a conclusive evidence against the authenticity of this book, I might, at once, content myself; might throw down the gauntlet, affured that the intelligent reader would join in deprecating the author of so many untruths, join in deprecating the interested espousers of a system of errors. But let us for

"God suspended the laws of nature in Egypt." For this suspension, the possibility of which I shall consider elsewhere, we have no reason assigned, but God's continued love for a set of rebels, who had polluted his temples, and subverted and defied his laws: for a set of faithless wretches, who had broken all former covenants, and were even now slying before a king justly enraged against them, for their injustice, their cruelty, and, of course,

courfes their impieties: for a fet of leagued banditti, who after repeated dife loyalties, after frequent attempts to overthrow the organized and constituted system. of the Egyptian government, were deferyedly curbed by the falutary laws of Pharaph's councile a fet of desperadoes, who, with Mofes at their head, borrowed, for fo Mbfes's modefty terms every ungracious theft, the jewels of the Egyptians: a theft which was the more heinous, inafmuch as Mofes is faid to have commanded it in the name of "the hord God:" a fee of blood thinly ruffians, who, finding that Pharach would not seles his just discipling, finding that their captivity was fixed for life. fallied forth, in all the favageness of their nature, with Moles at their head, and flaughtered the first born of every kind and denomination of man and beaft, fulfilling, by these means, a republished false prophecy : ... a fee of affassins, who had, after committing these unexampled crimes, been driven out of Egypt, followed by Pharach

Pharaoh and his host: with such men it is, as we are told, and as I am forry to find your lordship believes, that God made covenants: to rescue such men, he, we are also told, opened a dry passage to this murmuring faction of thieves, of murderers, and liars, destroying, at the same instant, their wrathful, but justly wrathful profecutors. The whole story is a bloody salfehood.

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Well might your lordship wonder, well might you suggest your surprise, that a perfect and merciful God should have been so partial as to become the God and governor of that one particular nation; it would, indeed, be a demeaning of his sacred self, for him to give to such a crew any statutes, any ordinances at all. But, to suppose that a Being, who is the perfection of wisdom, could have given "a burdensome ritual of worship," is more than I can well reconcile to your known character: however, you are in all these matters

matters guided by, I will fay, an apparently-generous zeal: may the God of nature and man grant you a speedy release from what I think the prison of habit, and the chains of false faith.

that there events there walls taken a

This faith often leads your lordship much out of the high way of reason;--what but this could have produced that reflection, which is the conclusion already alluded to, " As well might a child, when arrived at a state of manhood, contend, that he (fays your lordship had never either stood in need of, or experienced the fostering care of a mother's kindness, the wearifome attention of his nurse, or the inflruction and discipline of his schoolmaster."-As these words are the sum of the inference you have thought fit to draw from that long ftring of incidents, I shall here cite the context paragraph. 10 . inst .... theil, and mutler, gird inffrudteil, and illai

<sup>&</sup>quot;I have converted (fays your lordship)
with many deists, and have always found,
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that the strangeness of these things," (such as the covenants, the red-fea miracle, &c.) " was the only reason for their disbelief of them: nothing fimilar has, happened in their time; they will not, therefore, admit that these events have really taken place ar any time." No, my lord, nor are we as much furprised to find this incredulity, as we should be to hear a child, when arrived at a flate of manhood, contend, that "he had never either food in need of or experienced the fostering care of a mother, &c." Were, indeed, any thing of this unnatural kind contended for, we must, at once, pronounce the person so contending out of his fenses. Who is there, that lives in any fociety with his kind, but knows that to produce him, it was neceffary his father should be affociated, for a time, with his mother? Who fo gignorant, but knows he must have been fostered, and nursed, and instructed, and disciplined?-None, myflord, not even one, But Suppose the case to stand thus :--- a man publishes that

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publishes a book, wherein he states, that there is, in London, a person who is grown up to the state of manhood, but who never had the follering care of a mother, the wearisome attention of a nurse, the instruction and discipline of aschool master; yet is tall, straight, can speak, read, write, and play on all manner of musical inffruments: furely the author of fuch a book would be fet down as an impudent har: it would be fald, every person has had these attentions bestowed upon them, therefore no person could be tall, and straight, and learned, &c. without them. Thus would men reason experimentally, and it is thus experimentally, that deifts reason, when they disavow the felection of one particular nation, to the prejudice of all the other nations of the globe.

It is true, we have it recorded in your book, which is, in this respect, the echo of the Old Testament, that "the Supreme Being selected one family from an idolatrous

idolatrous world; nurfed it up, by various acla of his providence, into a great nation; communicated to that nation a knowledge of his holiness, justice, mercy, power, and wisdom; diffeminated them, at various times, through every part of the earth, that they might be a " leaven to leaven the whole lump," that they might affure all other nations of the existence of one supreme God, the creator and preserver of the world, the only proper object of adoration." Strange things! What, then, the Deity felected a family of idolaters from an idolatrous world; selected an indolent faction, a blasphemous hoard from " an idolatrous world;" nurfed up a daring race of profligates, prostitutes, liars, fwearers, and housebreakers, "by various acts of his providence," into a great nation; "communicated to that nation a knowledge of his holinefs, juffice, mercy, power, and wisdom; 'yet a nation always the most upholy, unjust, unmerciful, that ever role on earth; a nation and a people who idolatrous

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who, in their days of power, were powerful only to do levil; being neither prond to wildom, morinindfulg of her precepts ? however, they were differningted, has varies ous times, throughout every part of the earth, that they might be sa leaven to leaven the whole dump," that they might affure all other nations of the existence of one God: and certainly they have made. their God manifest in all the countries they have visited: they have, by their base and perfidious dereliction from virtue, like other nations, denied the justice, the wifdom, and the goodness of the true God? They have leavened the lump in Europe, in parts of Asia, in America, and throughout portions of the African domains i a leaven which has proved amphibioufly pungent, a leaven which has crymbled humanity into the powder of fubrilty, and railed combultious furies from the filence of error: a leaven, which has made utury the standard medium of wealth and of power. Ufury! yes, my lord; as much acculations practifed

practifed, and as much countenanced, in this our over-grown land, as in any the most arbitrary empires of the globe: countenanced, my lord, by our parliamentary payabrokers; not only in their buying and felling of the suffrage freedom of the individual, but upon Change, and at the Bank:—but, the jews were appointed to leaven the whole lump.

with recognition and the of flathering hard, will Appointed to be the oracles of divine truth, and of created excellence, they wandered to and fro, fometimes under the efcort of a warlike legion, sometimes accompanied by arks and tables, fometimes inspirited by priests and prophets, but, at all times, and on all occasions, tumultuous, ungrateful, and wicked. Are these then the felected favourites of a righteous God? these his chosen people?-" Forbid it heaven!" Forbid that man, reasonable man, should delegate his intellects to a fuperstitious world: forbid that man, reafonable man, should believe those impious acculations Million

God: forbid that the bishop of Landass, who is truly a philosopher, truly an humane man, should continue to consider the jewish dispensation a medium chosen by God " to convey to all men, through all ages, that knowledge concerning himself, which he had vouchsafed to give immediately to the first." Really these words are a kind of religious jargon: the jews selected to be a medium of God's grace to man! yet the jews were the persecutors, and continue the enemies of Jesus.

These are facts, too much magnified by time, to escape either the attention or the scrutiny of mankind. Such, indeed, is my opinion of the human race, such my opinion of the progress of intellect, such my opinion of our natural love of knowledge, that I have no difficulty in believing there will soon appear a total schism in the superstitious housholds of faith: that soon, the enemy of truth, the soe of justice.

tice, the blighter of mercy, the fource, the cause, the preserver of evil, which is this faith, shall be superfeded by reason; shall acknowledge the enormity of those errors, and those iniquities, which accredit her throne.

Have faith in God, but do not yield your mind To things and men, as fickle as the wind;
To men, who live indiff'rent how they'll die,
Who take your purfe, and swell you with a lie:
Themselves high sed, while you in rags appear,
The breadless victims of a fruitful year.

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## LETTER VI.

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NOST European nations have been VI accustomed, from time immemorial, but especially since the institution of christianity among them, to regard the forms and rituals of church worship, as things expressly contrived and appointed by God. By the prevalence of this notion, the priefts eafily gained an empire over the minds and the property of the illiterate, while the more learned, fearful lest the magic should be discovered, contributed a small mite to decorate the banners of the altar. This inequality of contribution, naturally produced an inequality of power, which was always dexteroufly employed by the legates of popery. Willing Fa

Willing to confolidate their influence, and make their profession feared, these functionaries made the contrivance of forms their principal and early study. Improving on the models of antiquity, they very foon erected a temple to their god, Saint Peter; which was celebrated by laying the foundation of one to their goddess Mary. This more modern scheme of idolatry being thus, in a great measure at least, executed, the welfels of the fanctuary, overflowing with nectar and ambrofia, together with the transparent wafers of the mass, surprised the common people into a furrender of their fenses. Thus conquered, no affertion, however wild; no undertaking, however chimerical; no crime, however infamous; appeared too extravagant, too abford, or too horrible: crufades, forceries, and infant murder, were among the glories of the Vatican. How frange then, my lord, is it that there yet exists a vast nation, thus intirely devoted to impiety! thus intirely unmindful of the nii Hi laws

laws of God! More strange, I think, than that you and I are here: because both you and I came into existence in the course of natural events, and by the wife providence of our creator; but these inflitutions had their birth in error, were nurled in vice, grew up to the manhood of fuperfittion, and grow grey in the fervice, and at the altars of tyranny. This certainly forms no part of the works of God, it is no proof of the benignity of those laws, on which facrifice and oblation have been founded. Confessedly the faerifices of the Roman catholic are qualified by those of Aaron and the tribes: qualified by thefe, because you tell us the jews are the adopted evidences of the existence of God; are the leaven of the whole lump. But these things are in contradiction to the justice, the mercy, the goodness, and the wisdom of God: they are contradictory of his word which we have revealed to us in his works; and which is an unfailing proof of his immu-

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table perfection, and indiffoluble power. Lisimpossible to annihilate the most minute particle of matter; wherefore the creator of matter must be eternal .- And shall weifurmife an imperfection in fuch a Being ? whall we furmife an incoherence in his mature? furmife that he delights in permitting man to defiroy man? permits vice to predominate, to make his creatures noiserable ? furmife that he could be the God of the jews in Canaan, may, mill the appearance of Christ, yet configned them, bis adopted oracles, to banishment, to poverty, and to the wrath of millions? I beg my lord, that you will reconfider the jewishedispensations, along yet had been evalue the adopted avidences of the ex-

It does not require the aid of faith and prophefying to convince me that God hath prepared everlasting happiness for those who love and obey him." This truth can be supported by mere moral evidence. A truth which no human being can consuce, and therefore a truth which every

every human being is more or less prepared to admit. But to be able to admit it. requires no preliminary incantation, no prayers or fasting. It is a generous hope, which minds, elevated by contemplation of the Deity, will ever entertain.

Having said this, it might be needless to trouble the reader with a general, and word for word, examination of those arguments, observations, and suggestions, used by your lordship in reply to what you have thought proper to call Mr. Paine's grand attack upon the Bible. Needlefs, because the whole scope and tenor of your book can only go to recommend, and, if possible, establish, that God "hath prepared everlasting happiness for those who love and obey him." Could we apprehend you wrote with any other view, it would indeed be right to fift every obfervation or argument to the bottom. In fuch a case one would be led to remark your very fine and logical distinction be-F 5

tween

tween the words genuine and authentic, a distinction which by no means answers the purpose of your argument. For you tell us, that the Bible is the Word of God, yet acknowledge there have been interpolations of the Bible.

I think Thomas Paine, when he adopted the plan of investigating whether the books of the Old and New Testament were written by the perfons whose names they bear, or not, was not as fagacious as he, upon other occasions, had been. What is it to any body whether Mofes wrote the book of Exodus, if in that book are contained direct proofs that the Bible is not the Word of God? what is it to any body who wrote Genefis, fince now it is apparent that Genesis is not the Word of God? It might, it is true, be interesting to know them, could we bring them to the bar of public justice; but they are gone, and may God grant that they, we, and all mankind, may hereafter be made "as happy

happy as we can bear:" deluded men, you wrote, and deceived others, because you were deceived yourselves!

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That the statement of historical facts found in the Old and New Testament, may be a true one, is what I have ever urged, and ever supposed. And when your lordship, in opposition to Mr. Paine's argument, fays, " An history may be true, though it should not only be ascribed to a wrong author, but though the author of it should not be known;" I can readily admit the polition. Yet it does not follow that, because the history of the Israelites may be a true history, it is the Word of God. Nor does it follow, which is quite to the point, that because Moses, who was the law-giver of that people, made certain laws, which laws he, after a revolution in the manners, &c. of the Ifraclites, thought proper to alter, perhaps amend, the original laws themselves, or these in their altered flate, were those F 6 ano W

God is a perfect, just, merciful, and wife God, his laws must be merciful, and wife, and just; as immutable as his effence. Either this is true, or your lordship's notions of the Deiry are false. But you corroborate the affertion in many obvious instances.

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Julinterrogating Thomas Paine, you alk, s oWhat if I should grant all you undertake to prove (the flupidity and ignoratice of the writer excepted)?-What if I should admir, that Samuel, or Ezray or folial other clearned jew, composed these books, from public records, (many years after the death of Moles? Will it follow, that there was no touth in them? According to my logic, continues your lardthip; it will only dollow, that they are not gentine books."-Befides there being not genuine books, I am certain, my lord, that every man who reads your questions, will ar once pronounce the Bible " not the Word

Word of God." For this alone I contend, because the Bible has hitherto been received under that character, and because men acting in the character of the interpreters of the dogmas therein contained, have been, and continue, for the most part, to be the oppressors of mankind. Let the Bible be acknowledged in it's proper and only true character—as an history where the laws, the forms of worship, the wars, the intrigues, the blafphenies, the debaucheries, the murders, the incests, the adulteries, of nations are recorded; but where there are likewise recorded examples of the contrary virtues; where there are excellent moral maxims, found truths, and fublime imagery, with fome fmatterings of aftronomy :- let it, I, fay, be acknowledged as a record of this nature, for fuch it really is, and I am fure no deift will withhold his approbation, that the Bible be read by all mankind.

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Ultimately the Bible must be so received, in every country, and by every people, where the fun-shine of reason shall be experienced. Even your lordship's Apology is calculated to produce this happy change; it is calculated, as it ought to be, to fet men about examining for themselves; to fet men about reflecting on their past and present sufferings, arising, as they do, from a too-easy acquiescence in popular opinions .-- A ftrange acquiescence it would, indeed, be, did your readers admit, that a writer of the History of England would be justified, in assigning two reasons, the one absolutely contradictory and absolutely false, for the parliament's ordering the 5th of November to be observed as a day of public folemnity and rejoicing. The only true reason, and that is authentieated by the corroborating tellimony of all our historians, is, that "on that day, the vigilance of king James had delivered the nation from a bloody-intended maffacre by gun-powder;" and a writer who, having those

those testimonies before him, should assign it to the arrival of king William, would justly be accused of a design wilfully to deceive his readers. But this is an unimportant point; only it serves to shew, that we may be hurried into false deductions by a warmth of zeal.

I could eafily subscribe to the propriety of appointing the judges among the Ifraelites, to confider of and adjudge the punishment proper to be inflicted upon the flubborn and rebellious, upon the glutton and the drunkard; but I am far from suppofing, that the law, which required the father and the mother to appear as evidences against their children, was that of a God abounding in falutary and dignified expedients. In nature, is there any thing more unfeemly than the crime of voluntary and malicious homicide? which is aggravated in it's horrors, when found to have been committed by a father against his fon. When the parents of the chil-dren.

dren, alluded to in the law of the book of Deuteronomy, were fummoned to give evidence against their accused children; and when, in consequence of this evidence, the children were stoned to death, we inquire, Whether a more effectual and humane law could have been instituted? I answer in the affirmative. And when we inquire, Whether a law, said to have been promulgated by God himself, could possibly fail of preventing the commission of the crimes it professed to denounce? I answer, likewise, in the affirmative.—But neither was the law an humane law, nor yet the law of God.

Tythes were originally enjoined, confessedly, for the purpose of rendering the priest's office respectable, by affording him a mean of reasonable subsistence. At the time they are supposed to have been first enjoined on the Israelites, the produce of manual labour was small, and cattle were proportionably sew. The tenth of one man's

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man's fubitance was, perhaps, little more than might support a prieft for a day : because, from the nature of their itinerant life, they never could have had more than ten days provisions in store: and even supposing that the kings of Ifrael governed a regular and organized country; fill the tenth part of the animal produce would do little more than support themfelves and their priefts var any rate, "the labourer is worthy of his hire. And the priests, who certainly performed the various duties their respective stations impoled, were entitled to a maintenance. But, my lord, are the people of England, are the members, the dignitaries of the church of England, therefore justifiable in permitting the curates to die infolvent? to be struck down by the force of poverty? immolated by the band of pride? and denied the honours of a decent funeral? Curfe upon the injustice that caused their fall land worder inco trens should a stat

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A memorable event rescues your lord. thip from any direct imputation of this kind. In the house of lands you were known to countenance a more general distribution of the revenues of the church. Did you then think the tythes, if honefly obtained, were honeftly applied? Clearly you did not; you thought, and acted like one truly impressed with the multiplied horrors of a religious flaughter-house. For fuch the church of England, at one time, was ;--- fuch it was in the days of Henry VIII - fuch the unfortunate cardinal Wolfey left it :- fuch Bonner found it :-- and the moderns have turned the stake into grinding mill. We grind down the curate, who does the chief of the work, to 1 cl. per annum; while deans, rectors, and vicars; foort with the miseries they thus create: Sport with the feelings of a man who will not be permitted to preach or read prayers, unless he is powdered and has a black coat on; who, when he modeftly represents his wants, is haughtily told.

told, "Go where you can be better provided: there are hundreds ready for your office." Heaven defend me against such christian charity!

I am furprised, my lord, that you have felected the example of PiGfratus, the tyrant, as a reason why tythes ought to be paid. Pifistratus, you know, was a rank usurper: he had supplanted the moralist Solon --- had caused an insurrection in Athens ... had wounded himself, and the mules that drew his chariot, in order to feize the passions, and, with them, the lives and the liberties of the people; governed, it is true, awbile, with moderation, but that only to pave his way to ultimate despotism: he married the daughter of Megacles, but let her remain in a state of perpetual widowhood; and crowned his fuccesses by enacting a law, which obliged the inhabitants of the city to retreat to the country; where, though they could loudly inveigh against his measures, they . Carter

they had not the power or the means necessary to dethrone him. In fine, Pisistratus seems to be the model which William Pitt has followed: for the Athenians, when they complained of real and gross injustice, were called turbulent and tumultuous: as are the English of our day, when they utter their provoked murnurs: and to prevent the English from scrutinizing the measures of a suspected cabinet, Pitt, like Pisistratus, has enacted a law which is to force the people to be quiet, and yet to be oppressed! Pisistratus then is the memorable patron of tythes.

Already I have gone at confiderable length into a detail of the reasons which induce me to decline following your lord-ship in every change and contest your author has obliged you to engage in. Professing only a wish to convince myself, and the world, that the Bible is not the Word of God; the several instances I have adduced from the Bible itself, are amply evin-

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evincive of the truth of that affertion: they evince, that the Bible is a compilation of strange stories, told in the manner of the eastern writers. In this undertaking, I have brought your lordship's own testimony in aid of some affertions, and to corroborate others: that your book affords these aids, cannot be denied, of which the following is a strong proof:—

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"A small addition to a book does not (says your lordship) destroy either the genuineness or the authenticity of the whole book. I am not ignorant (you continue) of the manner in which commentators have answered this objection of Spinoza, without making the concession which I have made; but I do not scruple in admitting, that the passage in question, consisting of nine verses, containing the genealogy of some kings of Edom, might have been inserted in the book of Genesis, after the book of Chronicles (which was called in Greek by a name importing, that

it contained things left out in other books) was written. The learned have shewn that (continues your lordship) interpolations have happened to other books; but these insertions, by other hands, have never been considered as invalidating the authority of those books."

But, my lord, if fuch interpolations did not invalidate the whole of their authority, might not a part of their genuineness, and with this some of their authenticity, be confidered as doubtful? Such books have, however, no claim to divine origin, no claim to facred immunities, nothing in common with the Word of God. With Mr. Paine I, however, widely differ, when he fays (for thus your lordship quotes him) " Take away from Genesis the belief that Moles was the author, on which only the strange belief that it is the Word-of God has flood, and there remains nothing of Genefis but an anonymous book of stories, fables, traditionary or invented abfurdities,

or of downright lies." No doubt this book of Genelis contains fables and abfurdities, but there is as little reason to doubt that it may contain truths. As a piece of history, for fuch I efteem it, Genefis, among a thousand stories, which, for want of invention, would difgrace a hobgoblin-book writer, relates the fate of armies and the event of battles: thefe things, whether they happened at the time apparently alluded to, or not, are no-wife unaccountable in their own natures. We know that war and rapine are nearly as old as the world; this we know by parity of reasoning; but we cannot by that, or any other possible means, know how light could have been manifest, three days before the fun was created; nor how any unprejudiced, nay, the most prejudiced, mind can reconcile the 3d, 5th, and 6th verses of the first chapter, with the 16th, 17th, 18th, and 19th verses of the same chapter of that book. The reason, therefore, why the book of Genefis cannot be the Word

Word of God, evidently is, not because Mofes was, or was not, the author of it,but because it relates two causes, and these in themselves widely different, for the appearance of light; because the writer, whether Moses or whoever your lordship chooses to substitute-has, inorcover, detected himself in the telling of falsearmies and the event of burtles . shood things, whether they happened at the time apparently alleded to, or not, are no-will unaccounted in their own member. We thou thing and registed are month as old as the world; this we know by this ricy of realoging; but we cannot by true; of any other politible means, I not now habe could have been merchet, three dies one wild for Thermound with the ball out of more judical, may, the most prejudiced, mind and reconcile the ad, 4th, and orn eries of the first chapter, with the roth, inch, isth, and inch certes of the fame chapter of that book. The realon, therefore, way the book of Cenedy connot be the Word LET-

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JOUR lordship asks, " Is it a story, that our first parents fell from a paradifiacal state---that this earth was destroyed by a deluge—that Noah and his family were preferved in the ark, and that the world has been repeopled by his descendants?" To enable your correspondent to fatisfy himself about these questions, you refer him, not to the Bible, which one would think you would always do, especially on topics of their magnitude, but to Grotius. Now I have carefully perused Grotius, but do not find that he has removed the reasonable doubts of any who have ever read the following verses of the first chapter of Genesis-Verle

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Verse 26, "And God said, Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness: and let THEM have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the sowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth."

Verse 27, "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he bim: male and semale created he THEM."

Such are the words of the writer of the book of Genefis, and such, according to you, the Word of God. But how can the reader of candour reconcile the words rendered in italic, with their parallels rendered in roman capitals? how reconcile the account of only one man (Adam) having been created, while, in the same breath, we read, THEM, that is to say, MEN? or, if you read it in the sense it seems to have received in the 27th verse, how reconcile this anterior creation of male and semale, (for anterior it certainly was to the rib-opera-

operation,) to that event, which happened the day after? In the 31st verse we read, "And God saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the fixth day." Confequently, both man and woman were created before the expiration of the fixth day. But no, fays this faithful historian, in the 7th verse of the 2d chapter, " The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living foul." Here then we have testimony upon testimony; but they happen, unfortunately, to be politive and contradictory. In the ift chapter it is folemnly recorded, that God created man and woman in his own image, and bleffed them, and commanded them to be fruitful, &c. which all happened before the expiration of the 6th day; whereas, after the expiration of the 6th day, we read in the 2d chapter, of a man being created, and left we should suppose such a being had ment G 2 been

phatically observes, "And he breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." Again,

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We are told in this 2d chapter, the 21st verse, " And the Lord God caused a deep fleep to fall upon Adam, and he flept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof. And the sib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam faid, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man." Here then, my lord, we have the origin of two splendid creations laid before us, and we are to choose our first parents from the creation of the 6th day, or from the creation of the 7th day: we are to believe that there was a woman created, not only out of the rib the Lord God took out of Adam's fide, but one also created at the time the first man

man was created. Things fo grofsly falle, that I blush to have bestowed my time in their examination! However, they add to the long lift of proofs, now before the world, of the frequently stated fact, That THE BIBLE IS NOT THE WORD OF Goo. In addition to this, we have had it clearly proved to us, that the whole of the story about Adam and Eve is false. We discover, it is true, the reason why Moles, or whoever was the writer of the book of Genesis, found it necessary to recommend marriage; and this, he thought, he could do in no terms fo forcible as those in which the rib-fiction is told. Marriage, doubtless, is an useful, and therefore important institution: nor ought those united in the banns, to pollute or betray the bed of matrimony. fest the Israelites, already notorious for debauchery, should neglect their wives, their law-giver, perhaps a thousand years after the creation of the world, trumps up a flory of a strange dream, of God's G3 being

being an apothecary, in giving a sleeping potion to Adam; and that he was a surgeon, because he stole a rib out of his side; that this rib was manufactured into a woman, and that "therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one. sless."

Undoubtedly these are strong and emphatic expressions, likely to impress awe, and, for a while, may have sanctified love. In this respect, somewhat of a laudable, and, of course, a pardonable solemnity, might be safely attached to the ceremony of marriage: but I know no reason why the zeal of the law-giver should be permitted to expiate the guilt of the historian; I know no reason why we should believe the Bible account of Adam and Eve, every where contradictory in itself, and no where characteristic of a dignified and omniscient creator; no where compatible with even our mean notions of

an almighty God; nay; no where compatible with the most extravagant hyperboles of the most extravagant brain, that of the author of Genesis excepted.

Amazing as these things may feem, they are not more so, than that one third part of mankind should have been, now upwards of four thousand years, led along, from day to day, from year to year, from generation to generation, in passive obedience to the unravellers of the plot. For this I can in no way account, but by reverting to the probable reason why the fophistry of the Old Testament had not been fully exploded; this reason I find to confift in the union of three grand events: the first, the delegation of power, by a people to a fovereign; the fecond, the avarice and wickedness of those sovereigns, who required, and ultimately attained, a complete afcendancy; as well over the minds, as the labour of their vassals; and, thirdly, the introduction G 4 of

of the Bible, at a time when this afcendancy had beforted the popular spirit, and made man fit to be acted upon by sorceries, divinations, and sacrifices.

. It was in this imbecile state of the moral world, that Moses, the jewish lawgiver, began his curious reign. The Ifraelites had long been immerfed in idolary and wickedness; but they chiefly complained of the restraints Pharaoh had found necessary to impose upon them, Only the hope of being released from these restraints induced them to join Mofes, as appears very evidently from the history of their manifold rebeltions. To quelt there, Mores found he must refer to miracles and prophelying; yet, neither his miracles nor his prophecies were fufficient to reconcile the jews to his government, Embarked in an undertaking, which he tendered perilous, by a show of enthusiasm, Moses soon discovered that he must live and die with the tribes.

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Not difinclined to travel into foreign countries, and preffed by the exasperated king Pharaoh, he likewife faw he must go long journies; and he did: on which occasions he could only command by a pretention to divine power. Of this, a most remarkable instance is, in the affair of the battle between the Hraelites and the Amalekites: when Aaron was obliged to hold Moles' arms in an attitude of prayer, during the whole of the battle; when it was impetuous, and the Ifraelites ready to yield Mofes fpoke aloud; indeed, the deluded Ifraelites would only defend themselves so long as Mofes kept at prayer. A people, thus destitute of reason, easily believed whatever their leaders had the cunning to invent: fo that, in whatever point they are viewed, they prefent us with a miferable picture of human nature.

From their time to the present moment, men have been more or less subject to similar fanaticism. By means of superstition,

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the Mosaic ritual gained ground against that of the most laborious idolaters of his days. Himself, and his people, had mutually facrificed to a Deity they knew no more about, than the Baalites could have known concerning their numerous host of gods. These sacrifices were encouraged, because they afforded opportunities to pillage and fack defenceless villages and unguarded travellers; and, being of no diviner origin than the brain of Moses, the motives to these pillages and murders always echoed a deliberate injustice; and the cruelty of their exactions made the Israelites completely picturesque of this vice. Nevertheless, succeeding kings adopted the measures Moses had so basely purfued; they received the Bible as the Word of God, because the Bible had made it lawful for the Israelites to murder innocent women, and pull down and destroy whole towns together. With divine authority to produce for every cruel law, the Ifraelitish despots, glorying in their wickedness,

nels, and as licentious as they were profane, continued to desolate the unoffending nations which surrounded them. Aster them came the Greek emperors; and
Europeans of this day are borne down by
the accumulated perfidies of men, acting
partly by an assumed divine right, and
partly because it is somewhere said, that
certain descriptions of people must always
be in the right, though they may be for
ever doing wrong. But I am writing, as
well to explode the evil, as to trace it's
root. Let us, therefore, return to the
book of Genesis

Here I read, in the 1st chapter, the 28th verse, "And God blessed them, (the nameless creation of human beings,) and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the sish of the sea, &c." From hence I conclude, that these persons, male and G 6 female,

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female, obeyed the Lord their God. and did all that was necessary to cause that fruitfulness he had enjoined; but of Adam and Eve it is faid, that they knew not each other vill after their difmiffal from paradife; the words of the writer of Genesis are, (chap. 4, verse 1,) "And Adam knew Eve his wife: and the conceived and hare Cain, and faid, I have gotten a man from the Lord." Here then is an affertion accompanied by it's only possible proof; although to be fure there is an air of firange grandeur in Eve's saying, "I have gotten a man from the Lord;" if this does not allude to lord Adam, we are to infer, that Cain was conceived by the Holy Ghoft, and born of Eve: but there is still a circumstance not less extraordinary, and as difficult of explanation as this: it is that in the 2d chap, verse 24; we read-" And shall cleave unto his wife, (meaning Adam and Eve,) and they shall be one flesh."

flesh." Notwithstanding, we are told of Adam having lived in a state of celibacy till after his fall. God have mercy upon Moses, and upon all impostors!

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## LETTER VIII.

SURELY, my lord, you do not now expect I shall subscribe to the doctrine of original sin, paradisiacal innocence, dismissal from paradise, subsequent admission of death and satan. Of original sin I have ever entertained the opinion which now decides my belief—I have ever considered it a religious bugbear, made up of the sears and vices of men of abandoned lives: it's decrees and it's institutes stagger the best heart; for, according to these, no human being can practise true holiness, or persect virtue:—sin is the original compact; and the end of all our endeavours, death.

The infant, while yet struggling against the seebleness of his nature, is said to incur the penalty attached to the guilt of a person who lived, perhaps, six thousand years ago; and generations after generations do penance for his crimes: so that inhumanity and injustice alone signalize this law of heaven. But it is no divine, nor just, human law: it is, I repeat, a religious bugbear. Then, what was paradisiacal innocence?

This question at once involves an inquiry into the cause, infancy, and manner, of the creation of our species. The cause can only be accounted for by recurring to the page of nature, where we discover that the chain would be uselessly impersect, without the link "human." Why this world was at all created, is matter of vast surprise to those who have never taken the pains to examine more than the general outline of society, and never go beyond the surface of human nature. This

description generally concludes, that inafmuch as man is incapable of perfection, and continually in a state of anxiety and doubt, the universe is not the workman-Thip of a being in himself perfect; therefore, fay they, the whole of this stupendoufly miferable fabric is the work of chance. It were needless here to examine the many wild fcepticisms which have, from time to time, been urged, in support of this chance-medley: however, had I no other resource, I should certainly endeavour to confute fuch scepticisms one by one; but my refource is, in the moral evidence things afford of the capability of man, to be not only much more comfortable than he now is, but likewife to attain a wonderful degree of higher perfection, than he yet enjoys. To be more comfortable, it is only necessary to alter the state of the constituted authorities of fociety; and instead of being the creatures of a creature, toiling to make him indolent, and dying to make him more proud, we ought

ought to fourn the yoke, and erect our independence on it's ruins. When once you have removed the aggregate cause of mifery, the causes of human impersection will disappear. Imperfect with regard to our knowledge of futurity, the Deity, the fun, moon, flars, we may ever continue; but I am far from thinking, that, except the Deity, whose magnificent wisdom, so widely diffused by his works, is portentous of man's future elevation and happiness-except this knowledge-man has little to do with fearthing after any other out of his own sphere. I own it is peculiarly entertaining for those who devote themfelves to affronomical and other abstruce refearches, when they are able to fit down, and communicate their speculations to paper: but what, my lord, is the fate of all their labour? only to be kicked at by some posterior theorist. Even Sir Isaac Newton has been mentioned with coolness. by those who thought they had discovered his errors: and Eaclid himself is now put

to the test, and some doubts entertained concerning the truth of one or two of his propositions. No doubt Euclid's Elements are, in themselves, useful to those who are to purfue a certain line of life: but I have lately thought that, had ever these Elements been lost, some one might have appeared, who would have discovered them. While we are in possession of any thing really valuable, and which is pronounced as perfect as human science can make it, we feldom evince a disposition either to improve it ourselves, or admit that it could be improved by others: however, this possession lost, and with it all our means of re-acquiring it, there can be no doubt but that future generations will make the same discovery. Hence then, it is prefumed, that improvements are as progreffive as our race, which is ever folicitous to preferve our discoveries, but never unable to regain them if loft. Nature is capable only of certain degrees of improvement, and the produces the means fuccessively, in every

had Homers in England, had the Grecian Homer's works never been found.

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A man may hope to equal those who have not been pronounced inimitable, but emulation cannot be induced in a mind overawed by this fiat of an imperious world. The poetry of Homer is not only admired, but by many deified, infomuch that it would be deemed impolitic to pronounce him imitable. This then is one among the reasons why man continues to be the adorer of man: one among the reasons why I consider man capable of being more comfortable, and more perfect, than he now is: nor less a reason whyman should limit his speculations, contenting himfelf with the study of the world he lives in. This study would necessarily limit our unproductive travels to planets, our wanderings after meteors, our claim to the science of comets, the never-to-beunderstood theory of attraction, and all the hideous

hideous train of felf-created fictions. It would ameliorate the condition of human nature; it would humble the pride of infatuated theorists, and bring science to the level of reason.

Thus have I been endeavouring, however unfuccefsfully, to shew that there is
no real want of wife economy in the plan of
treation; but that all men are, on the
contrary, every way capable of that felicity which exalts, and that perfection
which adorns, the virtuous. Vice is alone
the production of necessity, and this necessity is imposed by the overgrown agents
of pride and folly.

With this view of the subject, we, doubtless, might proceed to higher, and, perhaps, more important inquiries; but it is more relevant to our present purpose, now to consider the cause of the creation of our species.

This cause would seem amply detailed in the faithful, though perhaps inclegant, furvey we have just been making, of the rife and progress of political distinctions. In the course of this survey, we have certainly discovered that man was not created as imperfect as is imagined by his philosophic felf, but that his creator has endowed him with certain faculties, fenfes, appetites, and defires; faculties to examine, and propound, and improve, objects of fenfe; fenses to refine his appetite, and appetite to provoke defire: each necessary to the existence of each, and each qualified to correst and refine the other: so that we owe our physical maladies to our moral irregularity. And this is alone the refult of rational debasement: hence man was created to use his reason for the preservation of his health; to enjoy, in his consciousness of derived existence, the hope of immortality; and with this hope, to honour, fear, love, and ferve his creator; and efteem, carefs, and affift his fellow man. Thefe

These were our duties in the infancy, and form our duties in the manhood, of our species. As to the manner of "the creation of our species," we can derive no fatisfactory information from any written authority extant : whether man was created in an infantile form, or whether produced an active reflecting being, such as, in the puberty of his existence, he is. If we imagine an infantile creation, the difficulty will be, how, unprotected and alone, could this infant-being emerge into manhood? This, indeed, is one of those questions which baffle speculation; at any rate, a question to which I have no immediate ready answer. We must, therefore, rest at this point, and fatisfy ourselves, by concluding, that the Deity, benevolently supreme, with great kindness, and perfect humanity, caused both male and female to emerge from the decomposed chaos. Nothing, therefore, can fo much interest man, as his duty to his creator; next to which is the duty he owes himfelf,

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his kindred, and his neighbour: careful that he never excludes the men, of all nations, from the brotherhood of nature.

But, fays your lordship, this is no proof that Adam and Eve were not created in the manner related in Genefis, nor a proof that they did not enjoy paradifiacal innocence. That they were not created in the manner related in Genesis, must be evident from the counterpart different account of the pretended same event: and if in the recital of this circumstance, we perceive an intention to deceive, how shall we be fatisfied with the more remarkable history of paradife and the fall? Common justice requires, that we should doubt the veracity of a tried liar, and this justice extends to the author of Genefis. Differing from every species of fablewriters, he has amused the lover of romance with a whole chapter of highfounding phrases, and almost unparalleled imposture e he has made bis God act the chacharacter of a fool and madman; but the God of nature is the perfection of truth.

From the profiter Lobert A patrick Whoever believes the story told in the 3d chapter of Genesis, does not believe that God is thus perfect, does not acknowledge his immutability of power, of wisdom, and prescience: but quite the contrary. Such a man believes that God could not have prevented the alledged incontinence of Eve, nor made the garden of Eden without planting a tree in it, by means of which Adam and Eve must incvitably forfeit their birth-right; nor have a previous knowledge of the fubtilty of the ferpent; nor have known whether Adam was in the garden of Eden or not. The worst of herefy is the crime of such believers.

Only a very short process is necessary to shew, that if the Bible account of the creation be true, there were not only two men and two women created, but that Eve

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Eve was guilty of adultery with one of them. Indeed, I hold it impossible for any one to think otherwise. According to the 2d chapter of Genefis, Adam gave names "to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beaft of the field;" confequently, Adam was alone endowed with the faculty of speech: hence it follows, that as neither the ferpent, nor any animal, except Adam, could speak, the ferpent could not have spoken to Eve. It will not here do to fay, that the devil had entered the ferpent, because the author of Genefis, far from supposing any such thing, has shewn, that God himself was not only ignorant of the guilt of Eve, but also of the means by which she and Adam discovered their being naked. But that this gypfy drama may be read and pronounced upon, by those who read your lordship's Apology, and this Examination, I shall here quote the whole of the chapter thus alluded to.

"Genefis, chap. iii. verse 1, to the end. Now the ferpent was more fubtil than any beaft of the field which the Lord God had made: and he faid unto the woman, Yea, hath God faid, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman faid unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath faid, Ye shall not eat of it, neither thall ye touch it, left ye die. And the ferpent faid unto the woman, Ye shall not furely die. For God doth know, that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened: and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman faw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be defired to make one wife; the took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked: and they fewed

fewed fig-leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day : and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the prefence of the Lord God amongst the trees! of the garden. And the Lord God called unto Adam, and faid unto him, Where art thou? And he faid, I heard thy voice in the garden; and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. And he faid, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee, that thou shoulds not eat? And the man faid, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the Lord God faid unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman faid, The ferpent beguiled me, and I did ear. And the Lord God faid unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art curfed above all cattle, and above every beaft of the field: upon thy belly? H 2 fhalt

Shak thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life. And I will put entmity between thee and the woman, and between thy, feed and her feed : it shall bruife thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy forrow and thy conception; in forrow thou shalt bring forth children: and thy defire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam he faid, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast caten of the tree of which I commanded thee, faying, Thou shalt not eat of it: curfed is the ground for thy fake; in forrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee: and thou shalt eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of thy face Malt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return. And Adam called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of

all living. Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them. And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil. And now lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground, from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man: and he placed at the east end of the garden of Eden, cherubims, and a staming sword, which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life."

Having laid this volume of evidence before the reader, it would ill become me to dictate his decision. On a subject so clear, all men must think alike; must pronounce the story-teller, a bad contriver, and a worse logician; must at once determine the whole into a mosaicism; a shift to gain popularity, and keep the right of suffrage in his own hands.

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where we read of the curious affair of the world being destroyed by a deluge, this love of exclusive fuffrage prominently firlkes the eye. Your lordfhip feems to think that the world was repeopled by Noah's descendants; but you have forgorten that it is no where faid that there were any written records, in the days of Noah, either of the history of man, or of the anrediluvians. If there were, they do not feem to have reached his fuccessors; indeed, fuch a thing is not mentioned in the inventory of the cargo that was put on board the ark. This richly laden veffel had on board only 14 males and 14 females, of every clean living creature, and 4 males and 4 females, of every unclean living creature, that was upon the earth, in the bowels of the earth, in the air, and in the waters under the earth.-

Almighty ship, almighty Noah too,

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You rang'd the world! we owe our dogs to you:

And every coward, murderer, and fot.

Each pois'nous root, the snake, and ghastly boar, Rank'd in the numbers of your living store:

Though taken from the verge of either pole,
A few short cubits circumscrib'd the whole!

Such, my lord, is the testimony which the credulous and the men of faith would mutually assord to their savourite Noah's expedition; but, if we examine the story by the simple rules of vulgar arithmetic, we shall see whether there is greater reafon for believing than disbelieving that the world was re-peopled, &c. by Noah, his family, and the several families of the ark.

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To ascertain this often contested point, it will, I think, be only necessary to know, that the ark was but 300 cubits in length, 50 in breadth, and 30 in depth, that in this space Noah and his family, consisting of eight in number, two pair of every species of unclean animals, and seven pair of every species of clean animals, with provision for them all during the whole year, are said to have been contained.

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Much curious and elaborate inveftigation has already been bestowed on this subject, by perfors not more conspicuous for their theological knowledge, than a profoundness of geometrical skill: the utmost of whose calculations has never reached a greater comparison than between St. Paul's church in London and the ark. Admitting this comparison to be a just one, St. Paul's church, must be as spacious inside san the ark, fo that St. Paul's will be faid to be capable of holding the whole of . hole animals with their proper quantity of food. Now let a man turn his thoughts to what he knows himfelf of the magnitude of fome animals; of that of the elephane for instance. This quadruped is frequently conducted through the streets of London, in a box or house of immense fige: but feven pair of elephants or even two pair would have a most stupendous appearance, if pur into a bex or house capable of holding them. Besides the elephant, we shall find that the world protion M duces

duces a number of different animals as large and stupendous; of course, the eye is carried to the contemplation of feven or even two pair of them, likewife led about in a box or house; but when the mind is diverted to the contemplation even of one of every living creature, St. Paul's church, nay, all the churches in London, if put together, would feem too limited a space to hold them in. And had Noah been able even to flow them into the ark, how are we to account for the gathering of them together, from all parts of the earth? A work immenfely above the power of one man in a thousand years! Here it will be needless for those who differ with me in epinion to refort to miracles: for the words of the writer of the book of Genefis are plain and conclusive. " And the Lord faid unto Noah (Genefis, chap. vii. verfes 1, 2, 3), "Come thou, and all the house into the ark: for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation. Of every clean beaft thou shalt take to thee by fevens. H5

fevens, the male and his female; and of beafts that are not clean, by two, the male and his female. Of fowls also of the air by fevens, the male and the female, to keep feed alive upon the face of the earth." To sublist the quadruped portion of this wast family, it was necessary, that Noah should have had upwards of 300,000 cubits of hay, that is to fay, a rick of hay that should be 450,000 feet long, 450,000 feet broad, and 450,000 feet deep. Now where was all this hay to be had from? It was not possible that Noah and his family could have had fuch a quantity of their own making; and we are told, that except Noah and his family every human creature then alive were overwhelmed in the waters of the flood, so that their means of sustenance was also destined to be destroyed. However, it may be here objected, that Noah received the command of the Lord to take unto him " of all food that is caten." Now let it be granted that Noah was permitted to take the effects of his (cvens,

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his neighbours without provocation, or granting that he had a warrant from hea ven authorifing him to do fo, where was there room for the quantity of hay fo required, and the quantity of earth in which "two pair of all creeping things" must be fubfifted? for fubfift they cannot out of earth; and this earth must of course be constantly fed with water, and where were the people to water it? or, if they had erected pumps in the ark, which is a fupposition by no means authorised by the words above quoted out of Genesis, yet these pumps must be supplied with hands. to work them. Hens and cocks must have been supplied with water-troughs, have corn and roofting places, nor could amphibious animals be permitted to mingle with tame animals; and hawks could not be where sparrows must live. Every animal. in short, would seem to require a distinct apartment, at least each would need to have resting room. Birds, but particularly the wild and flying forts of them, must have, H 6 had

had each a separate apartment, or they must have been continually slying against each other, in which case an eagle would destroy a robin, a rook might kill a sinner, nay, the whole generation of birds would be in danger of becoming extinct.

On this occasion any appeal to divine interpretation would be as vain as in those instances already anticipated, for we have not one word of explanation in all the Bible how the tyger was kept from destroying the goat; the wolf hindered from worrying the lamb; the ferpent prevented from stinging the horse; nor are we told how the ant, the bee, or the various generations of working drones were kept alive. For the bee could only fubfift by gathering his honey: now we are not at liberty to suppose, that Noah had fweet-williams and jessamins in his garden. Moreover it should feem, that houshold utenfils, instruments of husbandry, as well as grains and

and feeds, to fow the earth with, after the deluge, must likewise have been taken by Noah with him into the ark. A difficulty not less infurmountable than any I have yet mentioned is, that supposing, which is a supposition I make out of complacency to the friends of the deluge, Noah and his whole houshold, birds, beasts, and apparatus, had found room, and did live, in the ark, there ultimately was no place for his beafts and birds to go to. Forests and trees had all been destroyed; as we read in the 7th chap. already quoted, the 4th verfe: "For yet seven days (God is now converting with Noah), and I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights: and every living fubstance that I have made, will I destroy from off the face of the earth." Hence then every tree, nay, every fhrub, that was upon the face of the earth, must have been torn up by the roots, and laid proffrate on the ruins. For that tempest, which could disperse and overwhelm houses, churches, walls, and egalagnonic every

every living fubstance, would totally upset the cedars and the oaks, which, by the bye, are themselves living fubstances. A tree lives, rots, and dies; are words currently applied, and are as proper as they are familiar.

Is it now possible that your lordship, or any one not wrapped up in impenetrable prejudice, can believe the story of Noah and his family? Noah! a man who died a drunkard and a profligate!

King David was the favourite of the God of the prophets, and so was Noah of the God of the flood. But neither David nor Noah was worthy of the favours of virtue. Of the flood itself I am not required to say any thing, because the evidence of the non-existence of the ark is a positive evidence that no flood happened at the time and in the manner alluded to. By quoting a multitude of sentences or texts from the Bible, probably the faint glimmerings

glimmerings of distant probability shall feem to characterife one or two trivial circumstances; but certain am I, that the more the book of Genesis is quoted, the clearer will the moral, religious, and natural evidence of a trick be made. There are expressions which I meet with in the 21st verse of the 8th chap. of Genesis, which, to me, is one of the most pointed characteristics of the book being written by some person pretending to astrology: as, for instance, "And the Lord smelled a fweet favour; and the Lord faid in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's fake." Christian! heathen! deist! whoever ye be! do but reflect on the ignominious stile in which this God is spoken of-"He smelled a fweet favour;" that is to fay, he had fmelled no fweet favour for a twelve-month. not all the time the deluge lasted, though, as the creator of the stars, planets, sun, and moon, for such this God is said to be, he might have retreated to the elyfium of his hea-Lioverfial

heaven, and to the joys of his throne. But "he finelled a fweet favour"-not, 'he told the prophet, -not, 'he told the writer of the book of Genefis,'-not, he told Noah, that " he smelled a fweet favour ;" no, that would not do; for the writer of the book of Genefis knew the fentiments and the feelings of the Lord's heart, as we find by the words, "And the Lord faid in his heart." What! the heart of the Deity, the heart of the real creator of fun, moon, stars, earth, and man, open before the eyes of a puny narrator, a teller of untruths! My lord, you cannot believe any more for sport our a word of it. teld old but to be revered in the first design of

In vain, therefore, have your rumaged the old shelves of the historian for learned arguments and moral proofs: indeed the arguments and the proofs so obtained, are merely such as antagonist writers have spun out in opposition to other arguments and other proofs as seasible as their own.

Writers there were, who wrote in a controversal

troverfial manner, yet were agreed in the fundamental fallacy-" that the Bible is the Word of God." They agreed in this from interest, and for the fake of that interest (their temporal cures), they differed among themselves. If the contradictions of the Bible were discovered by them, which I do suppose was the case, they durst not fay fo, for fear of being turned out of their places. Others, again, fuffered themfelves to be enflaved by enthufiafm, which is ever begetting superstition—that vicious error; thus, then, the former class were writers from interest, the latter wrote from their passions. Plague, or persecution, or fire, were continually prayed for by one: rain, plenty, and gold, were the idols of the other. Those who wished for the plague were, in appearance, at enmity with vice; those inclined to persecution, were bigots; and perfecution and fire, in chriftian countries, were long own fifters. Those days are now past, and these, the glory of perfidy, have followed. In these

we have the Horsleys and the Pitts, and may yet be curfed with the Seyes's and the Robespierres. But here too I wish to be tender of my respect for the character your lordship so well supports, I wish to be tender of the character of any one really disposed to ameliorate the condition of mankind; tender of establishments, however capricious, because I wish for a cool, a temperate, a manly, rational -reform of the corrupted whole. To haften this change I should exert all my faculties, and therefore it is, that I thus address myself to you, my countrymen, and the world. Fearless of the frowns of the proud, of the anathemas of the bigotted, of the flanders of the idle, I have purfued and will purfue the good of mankind, as my duty in this life; exalting my thoughts to God, in frequent acknowledgments of my own infignificance and his almighty power. Confcious am I too, that fuch a conduct will be pleasing in the eyes of God, and is not unworthy of a reasonable soul. not

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not these my sentiments, I should indeed be unhappy: but they confole me now, have long been useful to me, and will, I hope in God, accompany my dying struggles to death. As a deist, I possess this consolation, unadularated by bigot zeal or unreasonable faith. As a man, I have confidence in this my belief of God; a belief that has received much strength, much confirming strength, in the course of what of this Examination is already past. I sloone flanguete at one link collect chaillianing yer, not like a despot, who passes seatence of death on the meconvided and the innoceus, bue in the flight, and wind ale in tentions of a lover of truth. Its every thing the friend of marking. I can be nothing, be an enemy to lound morality; in nothing injunited to that hamble peties verduce to top My incutedred in this carl tian code.

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portentous chain of Old Testament proofs, I am willing to make an animated struggle at the link called christianity; yet, not like a despot, who passes sentence of death on the unconvicted and the innocent, but in the spirit, and with the intentions of a lover of truth. In every thing the friend of mankind, I can, in nothing, be an enemy to sound morality; in nothing inimical to that humble perseverance so fondly inculcated in the christian code.

The more heartily I admire that humility and this code, the more abhorrent and

and criminal the vices of interpreters feem. These interpreters have manacled reason, have stifled her conceptions, and kicked at her laws, preferring their carnal interests to those they professed to have in heaven. Christian teachers, in the 8th and oth centuries of their religion, taught persecution, and gave the watch-word of murder from the pulpit. In a less remote period there were Luthers, Calvins, and Bonners, who, though in publicity of conduct they yielded the palm to Rome, made a shew of humility the forerunner of pillage. An æra still nearer our own gave birth to a schism that threatened to shake the whole frame of society from off the shoulders of reason. The year 1780 will likewise be remembered, as one of those in which the hydra of popery, in England, received a confiderable, though flow-working, check: flow-working it furely is, when we confider that the adoption of Athanafius's creed is, as yet, made the ground-work of church preferment: a creed

a creed which, in itself, deftroys the whole body of that canon in which the religion of Jefus was originally, and, in the letter and the fpirit, is now contained. With this creed before me, and in the recollection of a nervous and decifive argument, which I can adduce, on your own authority, I might, at once, tell your lordship,-If you profess to believe, that the religion of Jefus is the religion of heaven, you not only deny the truth of fcripture, but also reject the belief of one God. Yes, my lord, fuch alone, for fuch, truly, is the conclusion necessarily to be inferred from a creed, avowedly composed by a man not (for now I imitate the religious fublime) divinely inspired; yet a man who has folemnly appealed to the confciences, and as folemnly impressed on the minds of men, the worship of three Gods. In what then, let me ask, do we differ from the Baalites?-In what do we differ from Moles and his facrificing tribes?-In two effential points. الم والمحوط BaalBaal-peor was alone the object of worship in the country where he had been raised to the honours of a God: and his worshippers were generous or magnificent enough to facrifice to his praise on their altars. His priests pretended to a divine authority for all they said, as did his prophets: while Moses, on a system of mean œconomy, prohibited the multiplicity of sacrifices anciently offered up by his countrymen to their capricious God. But our idolaters have even improved on the œconomy of Moses, we eat the firstling and the satted calf ourselves! But, to the point.

Athanasius has said, and the church of England seems determined to believe him, that "there are three Gods, but there are not three Gods but one God:" an evidence, which, if common sense may be the judge, is sufficient to overthrow, at least, the practical religion of that august body. On the other hand, the Unitarians, some of them at least, maintain, that Christ is not God, but

but Saviour. Saviour! of what? Of two or three stupid fishermen! No, no, reply they, he is the Saviour of mankind. Now fure those poor fishermen were not of the fifb but the man-kind, consequently, Jesus may have been the Saviour of those fishermen only. However, let us confider him in the more general character of Saviour of all mankind, or, (which is the other grand title we read attached to his name, in the New Testament,) " The Saviour of the world."-To this character belong a multitude of duties, and from this character might be derived an indefinite hope. Those who were the affociates of Jesus the anointed, or Jefus Chrift, terms synonimous in themselves, surely had a right to hope, that not even an Indian should be deprived of "the life and immortality brought to light by the gospel." Did the Indians experience the benignity of christianity before the ascension of it's founder? or, do they to this hour continue ignorant of the existence of such a system? It is univerfally

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fally known, I meen among christians, that i India is at this moment, what it even has been, lat any rate what it was in the days of Jefus, a theatre of cruel idolatry : cruel I effect it, because, though they have the magnationity to facrifice their children to the gods, they have not the humanity to reflect on the abuse of paternal justice. However, fo are the Indians fituated with regard to the Saviour of the world; and fuch too, the conjuncture in which Africa! and most part of Asia would now be found. Against this, it will probably be argued, that the progress of christianity is not yet so highly accelerated as it may hereafter? be; that missionaries are daily appointed to vifit distant people, and spread the gospel of Jesus in the remotest climes; that however subtil cavillers may find a shrub or a twig fcattered here and there in the New Testament, Jesus himself never afferted that he came to fave all the men then living upon earth; and that, therefore, we are only to expect the completion of his

his ministry, after all revolution of ages But to this the reply is brief and in point: "You, gentlemen, may think you promote the good of your specie, by fendle ing millionanies far and near, to foread and propagate the christian religion; but, if your fuccess be that of the millionaries, who introduced it into Britain, instead of promoting the good or happiness of your specie; you may expect to find them refined in their vices, milerable in their minds, divided about Socinianism, Calvina ism, and the many more ifms which divide, and distract, and infest yourselves: you may find them at war with their neighbours, improved in the tactics of the army, and the evolutions of the navy of Europe; and, of course, improved in the art of destroying, not faving their kind: you may find them preaching, and praying, and groaning on Sunday; and, on Monday, meet with them in the house of feathing, or inthe chambers of floth, or in the cloisters of incontinence, or cheating and backbiting

bining their neighbours. These things, gentlemen, you may find perfectly under-flood among all your converted nations, as well at least, as they are now understood in the nations of Europe, not excepting our owns. Amen 19

10h that with this " Amen" the evils of affected piety might wholly fublide, that candour might take place of hypocrify, mechnes, of pride, truth of error; and nam become the friend of than! But, alail we revolve amidft the daily accumulations of prejudice, and are continually at war with reason. About matters in themselves unimportant we quarrel with and oppress our neighbours, while those of a ferious or eternal moment escape our obfervation, for aret despised. The Bible, which is nothing but a piece of mere oriental history, we make our rule of faith; and follow, but too correctly, the example of king David the profligate, as our rule of practices. That faith, which is at all worbnislou I 2 thy

thy of a rational being, inculeates the worthip of one only living and true God, a God of whom we can conceive no ideas but what are magnificent, no character but, what is perfect; and whom therefore we cannot truly worship if we are not in ourselves truly virtuous. But even in a less perfect state the worship of the true God will invariably prompt our discharge of the feveral duties belonging to us as men, as hulbands, as fathers, las fons, and as neighbours: it will exalt our thoughts, and inspire a devotional gratitude towards the Author of nature. Whoever faithfully! performs thoseduties, must ultimately share the efteem of men; and humility and gratitude are the guarantees of the love of God. Jefus himfelf gave testimony in favour of. these hopes, he professedly recommended no more; and less would have been unworthy of him. ... Let then his followers make their lives correspond with those maxims, nor hamefully profficute candour to zeal. That zeal which impels angry or unkind

unkind expressions is indeed a dangerous foe, ever terrible to virtue, ever inimical to truth. Really I figh, nay often shed tears, when I am contemplative over this world and man; over a world which a benevolent and just God has connected with himself, by certain emanations of his power, wifdom, and love; and over a being, who eminently enjoys the privilege of thinking and of acting right. Criminaticy can alone attach to the abuse of this privilege; but we are incellantly abusing it, and are therefore always criminal. Religion, that is, the practifed fyltem of religion, instead of deterring men from the commillion of the vices which thus criminate life, provokes and abers all the paffions which are incident to a mifguided . mind. It is because this affertion is incontrovertibly true, that real philanthropiRs have withed that lystems of religion were difused. By lystems I mean sects; governed by different laws, having peculier hopes, avowing certain principles, CHR 13 and

and holding separate and different notions concerning the Deiry. These seets, without hardly the exception of any, entertain and cherish sentiments more foreign to the moral juffice of natural religion, than thefe found in the Old Tellament incongsuous and abfurd as it is. The corruptions of civil policy in christian countries arose primarily from the revolutions caused by thele feets, and continue to bioffom under their tutelary despotism. They impugn reason as a traitor against religion, whereas reason is the only soundation on which truth can fland. They believe that Almighty God predeftinated the fall of Adam, but forget that the predeftination of fuch an event would utterly preclude the possibility of Adam living in innocence, making fin a fixed and unalterable confequent to life; forget, that the doctrine of predeffination denies the justice of Almighty God, They believe that only a certain few, adopted in the councils of heaven before the creation of this world, can

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can be faved; which few are usually denominated the elect people of God: but they forget that in this they are guilty of a monstrous perversion of revealed religion, and shock humanity, by their encouragement of jealousies, of strifes, and Schisms. They indulge, hay more than indulge, they profess the belief of a doctrine which defires it's professors to hope for universal redemption; or, in other words; than no man, however blafphemoully vicious he may have lived on earth, will be excluded from the felicitous elyfirms of eternity. But, in the propagation of this doctrine, it is to be hoped, the teachen is not often upbraided by the live ing inflances of that bafe immorality fo general among his pupils; that he has not delignedly encouraged inordinate or cruel passions; that, although he is satisfied about the fundamental purity of his faith, he does not affure the prodigal that his crimes lead to falvation, nor footh the perturbed criminal by fascinating assurances men de I 4 of

of future glory. But, if he does, what must be his condition when placed at the bar of an infulted, though merciful God? What the condition of those who live in the habitual transgression of moral justice, and chang their unhallowed praises in the dage of heaven? What the condition of those who deify the guilt of Abraham, by their adoration of his name, their approval of his covenants - of the wicked favourite of an unerring God? What, in short; the condition of thousands who have mis-stated the laws and the inflitutes of nature, to give authority to irrational and impudly faith; o make man unworthy of his wirthinght; the creature of Superflition, and the pillar of a faftem, whole comer home is the Bible ?- Out of this book such differing feet draws it slarguments; it is the author and the finisher of their irreligion. And, regardless of the dictates of reason, regard. less of their obligations to fociety, nay, often in repugnance to the ties of kindred and the bonds of blood, they reproach, and asperse,

afperfe, and opprefs their cotemporaries; thus rejecting the maxims of the benevolent Jefus. The rejection of these maxims by some, and their missiter pretation by others, have caused wars; divided families; injured trade ; depressed credit ; yea, defolated and laid waste vast portions of the globe. They are the vitals of the evil spirit. Their recurring animolity, their pulpit disputations, their hedge-hog leuds, are of all things most conducive to infidelity, most contrary to moral justice, and most influencing in the mazes of error. Their spiritual prejudices fetter the sympathies of condoling nature. Does your lerdhip, does any man or body of men not affectated in the common unchristian lengue, then wonder that I fincerely, and heartile pray for the adoption of fuch a fyllens as thall not only embrace those differing facts, but eventually convert their differences into love? But before this heawellly shange can possibly take place, the Bible must be sither differently mimerroiter . I 5 preted.

preted, or altogether disused; it's apparent absurdates reconciled and adapted to reason; it's louthsome ambiguities developed; it's exuberant buffoonery, draimatic extravagance, pretensions to prophetic divination and divine authority, either rejected as sourious, or, by a rational analyzation, made easy to the comprehension of all. And, strange as it may seem, I am not without hopes but there yet will be discovered a means of adjusting these now contested points, as much to the satisfaction of the christian as the deist.

However, your lordship, in confirmation of some hints previously thrown out by you, has agreed to admit that wif the history of the Jews be not true, christianity must be falle." This, though not a novel, is an important concession a accommodate apprehended in the progress of samplagous reasoning. In considering it maternalistic matern or necessary consequence for the prior

prior arguments, fomething like illufion or fophistry might, I fear, be detected. Of this fort is the very first sentence of your lordship's fifth letter, which appears to contain the fubstance of a paragraph in Mr. Paine's book, concerning the books Ezra and Nehemiah. The sentence is, "At length you come to two books, Ezra and Mehemiah, which you allow to be genuine books," &c. and, because these books are by Mr. Paine effeemed genuine, you feem to conclude, against your own doctrine of "genuineness and authenticity," that Paine must therefore be made to fay, that the prophecies contained in them are authentic prophecies. Such your feeming enultation in the discovery of this unconceded argument, that it may be worth while to follow your lordship in your carechising revery .... You alk, "Is it nothing to us to know, that the prophecy of Jeremiah was fulfilled? 'My lord, it is fomething to thereligious world to know that fuch an event as you allude to reall happened, and was a real fulfil-16 prophecy,

fulfilment of a real prophery. But mankind are yet, to learn, Ith, whether Jeremish was a real prophet; or, 2d, and which I think even less probable, whether a real prophet ever did or ever will exist in this world? The latter I mean to make the subject of some future speculation, and, as to the former, if the only and best proof of Jeremiah being a real prophot is that which your lordship seems anxious to deduce from Mr. Paine's concession, we have only to inquire whether a book may not be both genuine and unaushentid. You hold it, not merely possible, but demonstrably true, that the genuineness of a book is no proof of it's authenticity; and, as a converse to this proposition, you infer that, vice verfa, a book may be genuine without being authentic. The fulfilment of a prophecy by Jeremiah, as mentioned, within a parenthelis, in the beginning of the book of Ezra, cannot be admitted by Mr. Paine as a proof either of the truth or the fulfilment of that prophecy,

prophecy, because he uniformly contends that the Old Testament neither contains any real prophecy, nor the writings of any real prophets. Nor does he feem to have granted, that "the Supreme Being communicated to the fons of men a knowledge of future events." Indeed it is not easy for unprejudiced and dispassionate inquirers to believe that one real prophet or real prophecy is at all mentioned in the Old Testament. Be this as it may, your lordship, in my opinion, has attained no valuable evidence in favour of Jenemiah, in Mr. Paine:-it is truly laughable to find the author of the Age of Reason summoned to qualify a prophetic dogma. This I remark, because it is of importance that your readers should know how far the admission of the genuineness of the book of Ezra is or is not a proof of the authenticity of the prophecy, the fulfilment of which is therein alluded to. But with me the most fatisfactory argumend against the authenticity of that prophecy, and of the book of Ezra, is, that the

the prophecy itself had not been promulgated by Jeremiah till the year 629 before Christ; whereas Ezra is made to mention it in the year 536 also before Christ. Between these periods a lapse of 93 years had occurred; it may, therefore, be difficult for your lordship, or any other writer, to shew wherein the authenticity of the book of Ezra confifts. No one will argue that a prophecy, which had been promulgated at least ninety-three years after the event, the type of which it is pretended to be, is, as relating to fuch an event, an authentic prophecy. Had Jeremiah prophelied in the year 536, and Ezra written a testimony of the fulfilment of such a prophecy in the year 629, the authenticity of this, and the other transactions recorded or spoken of by Ezra, would certainly not be fo questionable: but, as the matter now stands, it might as well be faid, that a man, whom (for argument's fake) we shall place in the year 1882, would be effeemed a propher, because he might be abfurd robers, and of the book of Exra, is, that 9/11

or unfaithful enough to write or speak prophetically of the revolution of France, which happened in the year 11789: or that a fanatic history-writer of the present day would, in the year 1882, be believed, because he, in the year 1789, wrote an account of the French revolution, saying, "Now, in the 30th year of George III. king of Great Britain, &c. (that the word of the Lord by the mouth of B. C. might be fulfilled,) the Lord stirred up the people of France, that they made a change in their government, &c." But when it was found that the B. C. fo alluded to, lived and spoke that prophecy in the year 1882, furely the bare-faced falfity of fuch a circumftance would be detected, and that part of the book deservedly pronounced unauthentic: nor is it improbable but that the whole writing would undergo a fevere ferntiny. In examining the book of Ezra, an impartial mind will at once perceive that the writer dealt in romance; to menthis fact feems indubitable. But your with

your lordflip will perhaps reply, that the words ... That the word of the Lord, by the mouth of Jeremiah, might be fulfilled," as being within a parenthesis, are the literpolations of fome of the transcri-Bers of the book of Ezra. Than fuch an apology, no one need require a stronger or apter proof of the ungenuineness of the book of Ezra. And when we have confidered the nature of the prophecy, and the character of the prophet therein alluded to, it's boafted authenticity will be likewife defroyed. Let us then confider the nature and character of this ominous and spoke that property in the constitut furely the bare-faced fallity of facility of

About the year before Christ 336, Cyrus, king of Persia, a valiant and softenate warrior, in the career of a glorious
reign, besieged and took the celebrated
thy of Babyson, then the residence of
king Nebuchaditezzar, of brute-memory.
At this time the captive jews were spefor infurrection, and Cyrus, complying
with

with the dictates of a generous, deiftical mind, fet them at liberty: their Babylonian bonds being thus remitted, they implored Cyrus to iffue a toyal decree, commanding, that both the city and temple of Jerusalem should be repaired: still defirous to amplify in an heroic benignity, Cyrus granted their request; ordering all housekeepers to contribute, in gold, filver, &c. to the execution of the projected building on With this royal edict all, of courfe, did comply; Cyrus himfelf fet them amunificent example. This was the furrender of all the veffels of gold and filver &cc. that had formerly been ufed in the temple; but which were feized and carnied into Babylon by Nebuchadnezzan. When the temple was built, the various tribes, with their families, returned to Jerufalem :---and Cyrus was extolled as their deliverer. The custom of this people, from time immemorial, had been, to attribute both their good and bad fortune to the God of Abraham. Accordingly their

their deliverance was recorded by them. as the effect of God calling Cyrus to be his champion against the Babylonians. Both Daniel and Jeremiah are made to prophely of this deliverance, and of the necessary destruction of the city of Babyi Jon, "The former, according to one chapter in this book, feems to have published his vision in the year 395 before Christ; land, according to another, in the year 629 la Here is a difference of no less than thirty-four years in the zera of the fame. prophecy, fpoken by the fame prophet, but mentioned in different chapters of the fame book. I No trivial instance this of the infidelity of the prophet and his antitype Ezra! But, when did Daniel prophefy of the fame event?-Even in the year 534 before Chrift. Such then their prophetic accuracy | Ezra, too, has written an untruth, even in the first verse of his first chapter; for here we read, " Now, in the first year of Cyrus," which, according to him, was the year before Christ il aria 536;

the third year of the same Cyrus. In sact, such the multiplied instances of want of veracity, in this and the other Old Testament writers, that no man, at all timperessed with a proper veneration for truth, scanthelp being how and then in a passion.

There is a species of passionate dignity which delongs to the bowers of truth is and when falsehood aggravates falsehood, this -ladion cannot remain quieltentoled 'paldian too which is for fad from being a fee Ito reason; that; without, it oreason would beabforbed, and bewildered in every fupid prejudice. Aided by it, Iwa presend, lundaunted, but modest, through the intricate imazes of Bible-ftory. The warmth which Ezra coules, Jeremiah increases, and Daniel and his fucceffors fwell the growing pulle a Yer it is truly amiable to fosten our displeasure with a proper compassion, for those who may have been born, nursed, educated, and have died, in the arms of error. ethu

trion. Of this description I cannot help imagining Jeremiah was one. Read but his own account of his call to the office of propher, and this implicappear a necessary conjitature. In more than a source of the conjitature.

the to the 1th verse of his book, thus expedies himself, to Then the Word of the Lord came into me (Jeremish), saying:

hnew thee, and before thou camelt forth but of the womb, I find fied thee, and I ordained the appropriet unto the distinct. Then faid I, Ahi bord/God, Jebild January/poid, for I dm. II dhild, a But the bord had unto the, Say hotel and a child a for thou that go to all that I shall fend thee, and whatfoever I command the thou that speak. Be not study of their faces, for I am with thee to deliver thee, faith the Lord. Then the Lord put forth his hand, and touched my mouth, and the Lord said unto

unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth. See, I have this day fet thee over the nations, and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to defroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant."

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When matters are thus plainly flated, it feems almost unnecessary to follow an author with our comments. All the world mil know that an infant cannot fpeak, or be spoken to, in the womb; nor can one eafily believe, that while yet speaking to the Lord, he could not fpeak. But this exclamation of Jeremiah may be differently accounted for: nor am I anxious to reft entirely on the evidence of fuch an error, certain as I am that no philosopher, no man of common information, I had almost faid no school-boy, is ignorant that the natural means of begetting children, are reciprocally possessed by the male and female specie. This ability is likewise the efficient cause of conception; and generation

tion and birth are it's concomitant iffues, In plain language a man begets, a wol man conceives, and brings forth a child. The formation of a focus in the womb is not a confequence reluting immediately from the interference of the Deity, but a consequent inevitably attendant on the congitated or operative laws of nature. It would be a positive want of perfection, had the Deity so constituted the wegetating and animal functions of creation, as to require his mechanical aid at the formation of every vegetable or animal entity. This is an imperfection with which he cannot, without impiety, be charged; nay, it were a misconception of his attributes (and thefe are, I think, known) to suppose him at all imperfect; and inafmuch as his superintending the formation of Jeremiah, or any other child, in the would imply an imperfection, we are forced to conclude, that Jeremiah, when he fays, "Before I formed thee in the belly," his talking what could not; and did non

did not happen: but when Jeremiah likewife adds, At I knew thee," that is, God knew Jeremiah, or, in other words, I know a man who never yet had existence, we must prefume Jeremiah was not only a teller of untruths, but an ignorant enthuliaft, or, what is worse, an impostor. Having no difficulty in owning that Jeremiah might have been imposed upon himfelf, I nevertheless choose rather to confider him ignorant, and an enthuliaft, than learned, and an impostor. What I propose to shew is, that God did not commune with Jeremiah in the words of the verfes above quoted, nor in any other words then or ever. This, in fact, I deem proved from Jeremiah's own words; for besides the jargon of his divine conception, he tells us, that God commanded him to fpeak freely and boldly upon all occasions, without fear of the angry face of a king or a prince; for he, the Lord God, 'should be with him,' to deliver him from all his embarrassiments, from and perils.

perils, dungeons, and the fword, Instead, however, of the Lord God being the deliverez of Jeremiah, we find he was imprifoned by Ziedekiah, king of Judah, In this fituation, accompanied occasionally by Baruch, Jeremiah continued forme time, during which nothing Supernatural appeared in his favour. A transaction, which then occurred, induces me to imagine that Jeremiah could not even read and write. The transaction I mean is, that of Baruch being employed in writing all his prophecies: but on this I shall not much infift. The roll was certainly written by Baruch, who read it to the people on the fast-day. As a man of high authority, and a prophet, it was natural that Jeremiah should now become particularly offentive to the diffetute and capricious Judeans :- this was the cafe. Zedekiah's council ordered Baruch to be brought before them, who, when he was arrived, was commanded to read Jeremiah's new roll. Certainly this roll feems to have been shirt

been a proud and indignant denunciation both of Zedekiah and his princes; but the latterstill agitated by their superstitious fears, were willing to avert, what they supposed to be, a divine judgment. With this view, they fuggefted to Baruch, that it would be proper, both for himself and Jeremiah, to hide themselves, lest the king, in his pasfion, should cause them to be put to death. An injunction, which Baruch and his coadjutor very faithfully observed. But mind, it is faid, " The king commanded Jerahmeel the fon of Hammelech, and Seraiah the fon of Azriel, and Shelemiah the fon of Abdeel, to take Baruch the scribe, and Jeremiah the prophet : but the Lord bid them." What a barefaced untruth !- The Lord hid them! when we have just been reading, that the princes enjoined on Baruch to hide himself and Jeremiah; which they accordingly did. But, it may be faid, " This is a frivolous objection against a man, who prophefied fo truly concerning the conquest of Jerusalem and king Zedekiah." Now,

Now, I do not confider this a prophecy, but a conjecture following, as of necessity, a review of the then emergent state of things; a conjecture, my lord, which a man, used to bold conjectures, was likely to hazard, and as likely to prove typical of the real issue of that fiege; yet, as well might one receive any of the warriors of Rome, or Carthage of old, under the character of prophets, as Jeremiah; for the Roman and Carthaginian generals, nay, generals of more modern times, were able to anticipate the fate of their belieged garrisons, hours, nay days before the event had actually taken place. It has even fo happened in the course of the present war, and so it was in the days of Zedekiah. In fact, to suppose the contrary, were to admit, that God is not only an unmerciful, but a capricious and wicked God. But Jeremiah and his fellow prophets alone libel the Deity as this heterogeneous being. I cannot, I would not, for crowns, fceptres, and kingdoms, thus impeach his holy name.

name. Is it not impeached, is it not afperfed by the prophet Jeremiah? Surely This infatuated necromancer, this filly ghost-maker, tells us, that Almighty God commissioned him, Jeremiah, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build and to plant, nations and kingdoms. A word of truth is not included in the whole of this felf-created manifesto. That God, the just God of worlds and of intelligent nature, that the God of wisdom, and of love, should set a petulant, an invidious, an unfaithful man, over all nations and kingdoms, to rule and to destroy, is divinely impossible. It may as well be faid, that God appointed William Pitt and his colleagues to misguide the councils of this devoted nation. Both would be equally compatible with the immutive justice of God. Was it the act of a merciful and just God to cause the murder of a poor deluded fortune teller, but as true a prophet as any of his cotemporaries? This Jeremiah procured to be K 2 done-

done—as in the case of Hananiah, "in the name of the Lord." Did this allpowerful and just God command Jeremiah to accredit the evafive words of an idolatrous prince? To this your lordship will perhaps reply, "Read my defence of Jeremiah's character and conduct against Mr. Paine's attack upon both." My lord, I have done so, and I think it is far from being exculpatory of the accused. Undoubtedly, Paine might have used different, yet equally cogent epithets in his remarks on this and other Bible characters; but the scurrility of words is no proof of the innocence of those to whom they are applied. This holds particularly true with regard to Jeremiah, who certainly told not one, but twenty lies, and prevaricated as often. Paine charges him with telling the princes, " I made my supplication before the king, that he would not cause me to return to Jonathan's house to die there;" and your lordship replies, "It is not said, that he, Jeremiah, told the princes he went to make his

his supplication, but that he presented it." Pardon me, my lord, I am about to contradictyou -- Jeremiah did not supplicate the king in the whole course of this conference. " If I declare it unto thee, wilt thou not furely put me to death? Zedekiah the king sware secretly unto Jeremiah, faying, As the Lord liveth, that made us this foul, I will not put thee to death, neither will I give thee into the hands of thefe men that feek thy life." If in these words your lordship is able to discover any thing like a supplication, "that the king would not cause Jeremiah to return to Jonathan's house to die there;" fure you are easily deceived, easily convinced, that what is not, is. But your keen and penetrating intellect is proudly superior to the mists of fophism, superior to the quibbles of a pufillanimous necromancer. You cannot but admit, that there is no ground on which you can now fay, that Jeremiah even hinted a wish to be released from the bondage of Jonathan the scribe. Indeed, it was no K 3 ways

ways likely that he should, for he did not come from Jonathan's house, but from the court of the prison whither he had been remanded by king Zedekiah, immediately after the conference in chap, 37, which is the one you allude to. This fact, my lord, is undeniable; and it follows, that Jeremiah could not have supplicated the king to the purpole, and in the conference you contend for. But Jeremiah told the princes all that the king commanded him, and this command included the story of the supplication. Now Jeremiah either told lies of his own making, or those made for him by the king. Whether the latter was the case or not, I will not go beyond the Bible itfelf to shew. In this book, and in the 38th chapter of Jeremiah, verfes 24, 25, 26, 27, we read, "Then faid Zedekiah unto Jeremiah, Let no man know of these words, and thou thalt nor die. But if the princes hear that I have talked with thee, and they come unto thee, and fay unto thee, Declare unto us now what thou hast faid

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faid unto the king, hide it not from us, and we will not put thee to death; also what the king faid unto thee: then thou shalt fay unto them, I presented my supplication before the king, that he would not cause me to return to Jonathan's bouse to die there. Then came all the princes unto Jeremiah, and asked him, and he told them according to all thefe words that the king had commanded: so they left off speaking with him, for the matter was not perceived." Only these last words are necessary to put the object of that illufive and false reply on it's true foot. " The matter was not perceived s' that is, the truth had not been fpoken; therefore the truth was not perceived; therefore Jeremiah escaped the torture; therefore his views were accomplished; therefore he told a lie and prevaricated. Your opinion-" that he was not guilty of duplicity, or, in more intelligible terms, that he did not violate any law of nature, or of civil fociety, in what he did on this occasion," has to me the most K4 dio it

most unsatisfactory appearance. I cannot fuppose you have wantonly betrayed the leading principle of your life- truth;'-- but I must be permitted to fay, that you have, on this occasion, much mistaken her precepts. Jeremiah did not tell the princes one word of truth, confequently he did not, according to you, " tell the - truth, in part, to fave his life:" had this been the case, I should not have contended for the crimination of the prophet, for - I can agree in the fentiments of Puffendorf. As to your parallel between Jere-- miah, and the privy counsellors of the king of Great Britain, I am not able to - discover it's confistency: because Jeremiah was neither a privy counfellor, nor a fe-- cretary, nor a prime minister, to king Ze-- dekiah; but the persecuted victim of his tyranny and of his power. In this fitua-- tion it was, that he found himself compelled to prevaricate and tell untruths. A fituation, my lord, which would probably extort unfaithful concessions even Noin from

from ourselves; yet such concessions could not, under any confideration of the necesfity which impelled them, be fairly reconciled to the laws of nature, and of civil fociety; being a violent infraction of both. I must indeed have erred much, if I am mistaken, when from these premises I affert, that Jeremiah was merely a man of fhrewdness, but not a prophet; not the adopted oracle of heaven; not a man of strict veracity; in short, neither more nor less honest, nor more nor less equivocal, at certain times, than his neighbours. You say, he prophesied true concerning Zedekiah; and to support this opinion, you quote his 34th chapter, and comment upon it in refutation of Paine's deductions from the same words. I am not eager to criminate the man for his prophecy, but I willingly reproach the memory of Zedekiah for being fo petulant and unadvised, as to wait his inevitable doom. With the might of Babylon against him, it was impossible that he should escape the K 5 bar-

barbarous fate his antagonist imposed. However, fuch was Zedekiah's petulance, and fuch has been the petulance of many a filly monarch, fince and before his time. Had Charles the Second consented to the reiterated withes, had he attended to the successive admonitions of his parliament, Oliver Cromwell had died the remote admirer of pencely generofity: but Charles was a tyrant, and Oliver, encouraged by other tyrants, raifed the commonwealth on the ruins of the crown. Poor Charles! I lament your untimely fall: ah, I do! I even weep over the recollection of what I have read concerning you: would to God that you had lived more in harmony with Englishmen and virtue, you would have died in peace with mankind, and your God.-And you, Zedekiah, you might have averted the calamities of your reign: but, lo-the pride of human nature-that base yoke of intellect-hurried your destruction, and followed you to the twilight of death: the grave received your body; but, I trust,

I trust, heaven and angels embraced your

visualities and starp in smooth and I'.

Mingled in this, in that domaine we'll be
One general family, as wife as free;
Subfifting only for the common good.
Not running man for one the other's blood.
Yet, if on earth, our words or actions aim
At the mean laurels of a party name;
If only vice our fleeting thoughts employs,
Small our eternal comforts, finall our joys:
For death, to all, their proper stations gives;
Each holds the rank for which alone he lives.
Virtue's exalted, vice demean'd in turn,
Thousands are happy while their thousands burn;
Burn in those flames, that from their souls proceed,

For ever wounded, yet they never bleed;
The rankling passion throbs at ev'ry pore,
They seem, but are not weltering in gore.
Horrisic state! but vice is that soul thing,
Whether in those who toil, or in a king!—
While truth's fair sons celestial empires scan,
His conscious self impugns the wicked man.
Awhile, and we are gone, for ever gone,
To hail, or sly the all-benignant throne.

Let

Were virtue our's, we might this moment part,
This moment quit our sublunary sphere—

My lord, I cannot proceed: the thought of quitting even this unfeemly globe, penetrates deeply into my inmost heart; I tremble, left the abuse of the privileges I here enjoy, should fix my lot amidst the murmurs, and in the labyrinths of folly. However, I do not fear that the foregoing Arichures on your favourite prophet, are among the number of my ill-judged reflections; they proceeded from the heart, are the fruits of conviction; and can only be forfaken after their futility (and they will then,) has been shewn. It is not enough, that you have exhausted your logic in his defence; not enough that you have followed him in the feries of his accomplishing prophecies; not enough that you believe he was inspired by God; since proofs, abundant proofs, are given of the contrary facts. The lamentable cruelties

exercised by the king of Babylon towards his fellow king of Judah, do not make a prophet of Jeremiah: for no man, acquainted with the modes of punishment then practifed in the east, could much err in anticipating or foretelling that which Zedekiah, in such a conjuncture, might probably undergo. In many countries of the world, it is the practice-cruel practice! even to this day, to put out the eyes of those who are taken in battle. Our oriental historians have recorded instances of a whole army of men being thus cruelly immolated. Their inhuman conquerors even fend them home, to their friends, in this state; with only the assistance of a guide taken from their number, and also deprived of one eye; leaving him in the poffession of the other to seek his mournful way. So common is this practice among those nations, that any man may eafily prophely the fate of a prisoner. And whether fuch cruelties were common among the Babylonians, or only rarely \*11311 prac-

practifed, it was, I think, a matter of course, for the despot Nebuchadnezzar to put out the eyes of his conquered flave. Properly speaking, Zedekiah was the viceroy or bashaw of Judea, under the king of Babylon; but he became a rebel. Jeremiah knew this, and therefore admonished him to go, with his princes, and refign himself, them, and his army, to the will of Nebuchadnezzar. Zedekiah rejected this council; for which he affigned this reason-" I am afraid of the jews that are fallen to the Chaldeans, lest they deliver me into their hand, and they mock me." Jeremiah's answer to this objection is replete with subtilty and low intrigue: true, he fought only the deliverance of his exiled jew brethren; and this, he was in hopes, would be accomplished, by Zedekiah furrendering himself to the besiegers: but finding Zedekiah unprepared to make fuch a facrifice, the prophet denounces vengeance on him and all his house. With Jeremiah revenge was an idol deity. He facri--3519

facrificed, by turns, friends and enemies at her shrine. Impunity, sometimes, attended these acts; but the dungeon and the court of the prison were his occasional rewarders. It being the custom of the country to cherish prophetic notions, he, by a shew of austerity and continence, both, perhaps, peculiar to himself, acquired, nevertheless, a character for being sometimes right in his conjectures. But in the case of Zedekiah, and the threatened destruction of Judah, there, to me, appears nothing more prophetic than the reveries of Richard Brothers. The ancient denounced kings, and kingdoms, threatened with plagues and the fword, credulous and weak as they were, implored him to intercede with God in their behalf. This Jeremiah was ever ready to do; provided his own life had been previoufly put out of danger, and meat, drink, clothes, and a lodging, provided for him. The plague did not come; the The off moint and bourglamorg afword

fword was not drawn; the king was still alive; and these were accounted fulfilments of the prophecy. Again, Brothers; he prophesied the destruction of London by an earthquake, and fixed the time: Mr. Halhead and some others believed him; but the prophecy was not fulfilled: and these gentlemen now affure us, that Brothers, at their request, " prayed to God Almighty to with-hold his judgments, and spare London a few years longer." This the prophet readily did; and his admiring followers quote the falvation of London as one, and the most powerful, proof, that Richard Brothers is a true prophet. It is true, I am not fo versed in the mysteries of this new prophet, as to be fufficiently able to give the spiritual meaning of his prophecy to the reader; but some have faid that, upon his fystem, the threatened destruction of London has been fully accomplished. At the time when Brothers promulgated his vision, the sufpension

pension of the habeas corpus act was debated in the house of commons,—this suspension was agreed to;—hence, London had made a small progress towards destruction; but presently the memorable convention bills were passed, and these being sollowed by what is worse than bills— an increase of taxes!——let the reader say, whether Brothers much erred in prophesying of the destruction of London, by a land-quake.

Nor house, nor man, was by their power o'er-

The ills and prophecies were all their own.

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## LETTER X.

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IN the book of Daniel there may some flights of fancy and a draggling vein of prophetic plaufibility be here and there met with; but, considering the distance between the time the prophecies were told, and the æra of their assumed completion, there is nothing either remarkable or out of the course of nature in their issues, It is, however, impossible that any human mind should see so clearly into the unperformed actions of unborn men, as to be able to foretel not only the actions themfelves, but their positive consequences. To fuch as these the ancients often laid claim, and a deluded generation fanctified their impudence. The respect thewn

shewn to Daniel and other divining fages by the kings and heroes of their days, proceeded not from a conviction of the truth of their prophecies, but because kings and heroes had been accustomed from time immemorial to regard the anger of the gods or God of their fathers, as fure omens of defeats in battle, or revolutions in the state. Of things of this nature Daniel always prophesied; and where the prejudiced followers of Jelus Christ fanfy they meet with a type of their founder, it is really no more than a random guess, "who shall be king next year." This shooting at futurity was then a game of high advantage; dissolute princes, forfaken concubines, or titled robbers, were the birds of prey. Men generally imbibed hopes, or indulged fears, according to the wishes of those artful visionalists. So little in fact has reafon overcome those prejudices, that were the spirit of the times favourable to the trade of a prophet, one might now fet out on a fortune-telling and necromancing expedition,

pedition, and even before he had made the tour of England, have fome proof to adduce of his remarkable accuracy. business of a prophet, or fortune-teller, or necromancer, was, perhaps, the most profitable of any that could have been followed by Daniel and that party: it gained him the favour of courts, because princes were credulous enough to believe him. In the multiplicity of prophecies one or two might certainly feem fulfilled; but their fulfilment was no proof that Daniel was " the prophet of the Lord." Daniel was a favourite and a minister at the court of the king of Babylon; so is William Pitt at the court of the king of England. Daniel prophefied of the fate of battles, and, as there were no gazettes extraordinary published at Babylon, he easily concealed or falfely reported the iffue of any contest. But the prime minister of England has likewife prophefied, and that too very confidently, concerning the certain fate of armaments and battles, and fieges and campaigns;

paigns; and, lame as he is at the trade of a prophet, something like a fulfilment of his armament prophecy has been manifested: besides a few smaller prophecies concerning trivial actions in the course of the present war. But this parallel of the prime minister of England and that of Babylon is not quite so apt, nor so conclufive as it would have been, had Charles James Fox formed the counter part: for this politician has not only predicted the fate of armaments, but has perspicuously foretold the iffue of unfought campaigns. What! and is Charles James Fox no prophet? As much fo, my lord, as either Daniel or any other of the great men mentioned in the Old Testament. Mr. Fox, taking a general furvey of the present state of Europe, but particularly England, will. discover much of every fort of intellectual and super-intellectual arrogance: this, and the political depravity, may have an air of ripening revolutions; and from this he may be led to conclude, that " a virgin shall conceive,

conceive, and a virgin bear a fon," which fon, as he is required to fay nothing more about him, may afterwards be er the adopted political Saviour of a party," although he should die upon a scaffold. Now Ifaiah has merely faid, a virgin shall conceive! Merely faid? replies your lordship: how! a virgin conceive? Nothing miraculous, my lord; I need not tell you that a virgin is a "chaste maid or maiden." This description consists, perhaps, more in appearance than reality: whether or not, there are those who have that appellation conferred on them, who are actually advanced three months in a state of pregnancy: this appellation is never withdrawn till the prominence of the habit has visibly displayed the virtues of that command, "Be fruitful and multiply." But, before this has been publicly known, some poor Joseph may happen to wed the "chaste maid," and only discover the plot by means of a herald sent to him by the parents of the maiden, at the end of three months, to lull

lull him to sleep and considence, with promises of great reward.—Thus then the Holy Ghost the comforter must have breathed his quivering spirit over Mary three months before the angel came to Joseph to announce the virginity of his spouse. Let us, however, state, what some of the gospel writers have said on this subject.

In St. Matthew's gospel, the 1st chap. verse 1, we read, "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the fon of Abraham," which is continued in a string of genealogical distinctions till we reach verse 16, where it is said, " And Jacob begat Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who was called Christ." According to this genealogy Jefus is pompoufly traced back to his great ancestor king David; a vanity ever prevalent in what are called the higher circles of people in our own and other countries. From this genealogy we, however, discover the zeal of Matthew to have Jesus received

ceived as the lawful son of Joseph: a zeal and a conduct which removes all doubt concerning the temporality of Christ's office. For had Matthew believed that Jesus was God, or that he was the Son of God, begotten by inspiration, he would not have been affiduous to prove his descent from David; nor to exalt his name in the records of kings. It is true, we read (from verse 19th to the end of the 1st chap.) in the same gospel of Matthew, that " The birth of Jesus was on this wife: when as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, faying, Joseph, thou fon of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a fon,

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fon, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall fave his people from their fins. Then Joseph, being raised from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: and knew her not till the had brought forth her first born fon. And he called his name Jesus." Thus have I cited the whole of the account given by Matthew of the conception, birth, and circumstances attending the birth of Jesus; of the jealousy of Joseph, and implicated guilt of filent Mary :--- fubjects on which the other writers of the New Testament have written to nearly the same effect. On this account it may be unnecessary to quote their respective biographies, particularly as your lordship has comprised them in the words--- "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the fon of God. Taking all these circumstances into our confideration, it will be as imposanoel. fible

fible to believe "the miraculous conception," as the flory of Noah, his ark, and miraculous voyage. Matthew relates what to me appears a fairy tale intercourse between a mere woman and what his imagination taught him to call "the Holy Ghost." Whoever strictly adheres to this tale, and the manner it is told, will soon perceive that Mary had no intercourse with any one, except that intercourse by means of which children are ever conceived.

Joseph appears to have married Mary in the full assurance of her being a chaste maid; it however proved to be a false confidence, since in a short time after this marriage he grew jealous. This jealously evidently discomposed and soured his mind, for we read, "that, being a just man, he was willing to make her a public example. From this rash measure he was indeed diverted; but not by the interposing persuasions of a real (if such there be) angel.

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angel. "The angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. " People usually dream of the affairs of the day, but more especially fuch affairs as have perplexed and impressed their minds. To cause Joseph to dream fuch a dream, it was enough that he had almost determined to put his wife away " privily." Joseph was a carpenter, and, as far as we know, a holy as well as "just" man. The jews had always been accustomed to converse about, and believe in, angels; and it is very probable Joseph prayed to the Lord to help him out of his dilemma. Having then no Saviour to mediate for their fins at the throne of mercy, Joseph may have supplicated the archangel to mediate in his behalf: thus angels, and fpirits, and gods, and prophets, and faints, might appear to him in the agitations of "a wounded spirit." And, being unwilling to put away his wife, the fentiments of picty and of love, which had pervaded his mind in the day, were likely to appear before his fancy in the night, ar-L 2 moured

moured in the more captivating shield of an angel of light. Then it was, that, 'being a just man,' and not willing to make his wife a public example, or put her away privily, "the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, sear not to take unto thee Mary thy wise; for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost." These, indeed, must be the words of a real dream, and such was the dream of Joseph the son of David.

In England, should we even happen to dream any thing so curious, it seldom sollows, that we resort to supernatural hopes, or imagine that miracles shall therefore be performed. Yet, there perhaps is no one who reads these letters, nay, not even your lordship, but has, at one time or other, had dreams full as remarkable and supernatural as this miraculous conception. Of myself, I have, on these subjects, little to say. But if I should ever be unfortunately,

for unfortunate I should deem it, connected with a virgin, three months advanced in a state of pregnancy, and find that this valuable property was not my own, lord Kenyon alone should have the arbitration of the business. And I seriously recommend to those who wish for legal proof of the crim. con, in the affair of Joseph and Mary, to make out a case; fill up the blanks with Joseph Cadwallader and Mary Williams, both of Wales, and fubmit it to lord Kenyon and the other eleven judges for their opinion; being well aware, that their lordships would award the necessary damages, and recommend Joseph to fue for a divorce from Mary, his adulterous spouse. This, my lord, may feem a curious mode of treating the subject; but it is the only mode by which a case so important can be fuited to the apprehensions of some, and introduced to the hearts and understandings of others. It is a mode, the success of which I should esteem certain, even though your lordship had not I. 3 hastily -mirin

haftily turned afide from the discussion :convincing the world by this means, that you felt yourfelf unprepared to take up the gauntlet. But whatever your lordship's feelings may now be, I cannot suppose that the flory of the miraculous conception, except in the catalogue of the failings of impolture, shall long survive even your own concessions: these, in my mind, amount to a complete recantation of the whole christian fystem. In one place, when you are defending the jews, you fay, " It was their faith, alluding to the laws of Moles, in the time when the authors of the New Teltament wrote;" yet, this faith, which, according to you, was established on the firm basis of God's own law, was not congenial with the nature of Christ's mission, was not comparible with the office of that man! Neither have you rejected the much lamented power the jews have ever affumed over, and, if things go on improving on the examples of the Mosaic difpensation, still and always will haliti main-

maintain in, the christian world. You believe, "the jews are to us, witnesses of the existence and moral government of God;" notwithstanding that they are to us, likewife, the witnesses of the crucifixion of Jesus, for assuming the name of "the Son of God." Already I have made these irreconcileable tenets, the subject of a reflection or two; and should I now recommence the discussion, I should have just the same fatisfaction-I should just discover, that both Moses and Jesus, as to their claims to divine election, or their being the one a prophet, the other a meffenger from God, were impostors. However, I have never yet been persuaded, nor is it at all probable, that I ever shall believe, Moses himself pretended, or if he pretended, serioully subscribed to the doctrine of inspiration, vision, and the rest: nor that Jesus had the evidence of his own mind on the subject of "the miraculous conception." As to the miracles Jesus is faid to have wrought in Judea, his refurrection, and afcen-L4

ascension; historians, and even divines themselves, are much divided. The miracles are indeed few in number, and told in a careful and common-place manner: to me they have little of the character of divine power and prescience; especially, when I compare them with the historians Mr. Paine has alluded to. In these historians, and I ought, in justice to them and your author, to fay, that they have related their miracles as plaufibly, and adduced as many proofs, as the writers of the New Testament have done; - in these historians, I fay, I read of miracles. But I fmile to think on their credulity, pitying that of. the many, who, by means of this and fuperstition, were oppressed by the persons who pretended to the power of changing the laws of nature. It is yet more remarkable that Great Britain can, at this moment, produce accounts of numerous miracles performed within her pale, in the course of the last twenty years; performed, I fay, for so fay men, whose teltimony

timony I should more readily receive than that of profligate or idle jews, and fuch the witnesses of the wine and water miracle were. The flories I allude to, are told even by ministers " of the golpel of peace." One of these relates, that "being one morning amused with the sportive appearance of a gentle breeze, he took his fishing-rod, with the accompanying experi dients, and went to angle for falmon: in this delightful purfuit, he had but onployed a few moments, when, of a fudden, a stranger approached him; at a nearer view he foon perceived that the ftranger was no other than a man, at whose bedfide he had attended the previous morne ing, in devotional humility, having had reasons to expect that the poor man's last moments were at hand. Impressed with the retrospect of this folemn fituation, he hastily exclaimed, "Man! art thou alive?" " Seeft thee not that L'am?" replied the vifitant, adding, that he "expected fome friends would foon make their appearston w L 5 ance.

ance, as they were bufy in his village preparing for the funeral of a neighbour." Juft as thefe last words were pronounced, a perfor appeared at a small distance, and, continues the worthy clergyman, "haftened to the river fide : this was my coufin S . . . Musey who wondered, as much as myfelf, to fee this man who had been fo recently in a dying flate: but prefently came up to us three men, at the approach of. whom, the Supposed recovered man vanished. The three men spoke to my coufin and myfelf, and told us that they were in their journey to the next village, to purchase articles that should be required to inter the very man who had that moment vanished from my presence. I told the men what my confin and myfelf had just feen—they are living witnesses of our furprife, and we live to reflect on the loving-kindness and great power of God!" What does your lordship think of this miracle? a miracle, for the authority of which I might refer you to the clergyman whofe ance

whose account I have quoted, from his own letter, to a friend in Dublin, on the subject. For my own part, the last sentence, "we live to reflect on the loving-kindness and great power of God," persuades me that the whole was a dream of sancy. But not so, says the christian, not so the resurrection of Lazarus from the dead.—

Of this celebrated affair, frequent mention has, with great confidence, been made by every commentator, pope, and sectarist: by these the world has been told, that this fingle [alledged] miracle is, " of itself," such a proof of the nature of the mission sent with Jesus Christ from heaven, as no man, having the right use of his reason, can resist. Now, I, who am neither pope, sectarist, nor commentator, but a plain subject of these kingdoms, have no doubt, but that any man, having a consciousness of the existence of reason within him, and with but power to make this L 6

this reason the judge, will, on perusing the 11th chapter of St. John, at once detect the recordative prophet, in a fituation fimilar to that in which the author of the book of Genelis was, not long fince, found. Were there nothing objectionable in the account of the miraculous conception, nothing doubtful in the wine and water miracle, the affected refurrection of Lazarus would immediately destroy the whole of the divine authority of Christ's mission. In this 11th chapter of St. John, we read, " Now a certain man was fick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and Martha. (It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was fick.)" Besides the indelicacy of a woman wiping a man's feet with her hair, we, in this narration, perceive, that Mary and Martha were particularly interested in the fuccess of Christ's projects. They had formerly anointed his feet with an expensive oil, and

and are now employed in the deep-laid bufiness of deceiving the jews, and, if that were possible, the whole race of man, To effect this, Jesus is made to remove to a village, fituated at a fmall distance from the town of Bethany, where he purpofely continues two days: in the course of this time, Mary, and her passive, but iniquitous brother, Lazarus, are active in the arrangement of the plot-Lazarus dies, and is buried .- Of this, secret intelligence was instantly sent to Jesus; who, on receiving the news of the completion of his scheme, addresses his disciples, saying, " Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.". These last words caused some trisling perplexity in the minds of some of the disciples, to remove which, Jesus "plainly" adds, "Lazarus is dead. And I am glad, for your fakes, that I was not there, (to the intent ye may believe :) (of course they had experienced fymptoms of infidelity!) never-

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nevertheles, (added Jesus;) let us go unto him." From this address, it is evident that Jesus must have had secret intelligence, or was inspired with a prophetic spirit. Should your lordship maintain the latter opinion, how happened it that Jesus could not likewise foreknow the length of time Lazarus had lain in the grave? "Then when Jesus came, be found that he had lain in the grave four days already." This " be found," demonstrates that he had no foreknowledge of the event: but, replies the reader, " Was it not strange that the person who brought the fecret intelligence to Jefus, did not likewife tell him how long Lazarus had lain in the grave?" Undoubtedly this remark may justly be made—to which the answer is-Impostors and murderers are, in the end, detected by their own blunders. This clearly is the case in the affair of Lazarus: and when we are arrived at that part of the narrative, where Jesus is met with

with by Mary at the grave of Lazarus, the guilt of the affociated junto is made manifest. " Jesus, therefore, again groaning in himself, cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. Jefus faid, Take ye away the stone." What! a God, a prophet, a worker of miracles, not able to cause the stone to disappear or remove of itself? But the divine missionary is put more to his shifts in another place. "And he that was dead, came forth bound hand and foot with grave-cloaths; and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus said unto them, Loose him, and let him go." Pretty stuff to tell even a drayman of Thames-street, or the Borough! In the first place, we are told, "he that! was dead, came forth bound hand and foot with grave-cloaths." This is very plaufible, because we are led to imagine, that his grave-cloaths were not chains, and that therefore he could "come forth." But, " his face was bound about with a napkin;" nanci

kin;" consequently he was not able to fee, and therefore, if he were alive and ftrong enough to raise himself out of his sepulchre, he could not, with his face bound about with a napkin, fee his way out of the fepulchre. It may be answered-A man can grope in the dark. Just so: but, answer me, how could a man, actually bound in chains, (" Jefus faid unto them, Loofe bim, and let him go:") how, I ask, could Lazarus, bound hand and foot, grope out of a deep cave or sepulchre? In fine, could a man, having his hands tied together, and his feet tied together, raise his body from even the furface of the ground? It will be answered- No.' How much less probable then, that Lazarus, laid as he was on the bottom of a deep cave, fo bound hand and foot, and blinded by a napkin that " was bound about his face," could raise himself, out of this cave, to the furface of the ground that verged upon it's mouth? Really these things have so ": gid much

much of the character of a trick, that I cannot, without violation of candour, diffemble my opinion, which, at present, is, that the resurrection of Lazarus is an imposture!

università i lateliano de codevade aven II As impossible of the configuration of the same . - slamed an end become and an animal. -miles one was in the - and there of their the who ton all would be furnish I to notifier. energe, but 'wor brold, it made, the authorricy for lyclicving that Johns Chreb was Tomorrived by the Hole Chan, he be the survived of the reasons of the soldings doesd for his him or and an incline, and the pot according front lumble with the plant your fordeling with an and trackers. tion of tone of all. Prince being a tree of And they are the first that the continue of th fair " covered with believer, for the fordille Hedrocon orline and as an LET-

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## LETTER XI.

F now I have been successful in proving two things --- ift, that the account of " the miraculous conception" has no foundation in truth; and --- 2d, that " the refurrection of Lazarus" is, likewise, not only an untrue, but worfe told, miracle, the authority for believing that Jesus Christ was " conceived by the Holy Ghost, to be the Saviour of the world," as well as that adduced for his working of miracles, may be put upon the shelf, laurelled with the plant your lordship used at the consecration of one of Mr. Paine's broken arguments :- "I shall put it," fays your lordship, " covered with bellebore, for the fervice of it's author, on the same shelf with your

your hypothesis," &c. But I, my lord, shall not therefore lightly skim the remainder of your book: it is in all places worthy of perufal, and in fome deferving of frict attention. In endeavouring to fhew the futility of an argument which Mr. Paine has thought proper to call "incontrovertible," you fuggeft that " two authors, who differ in tracing back the pedigree of an individual for above a thousand years, cannot, on that account, be effeemed incomperent to bear restimony to the transactions of his life, unless an intention to falfify could be proved against them." As this is introduced to strengthen your argument against Mr. Paine's objection to the genealogical narratives of Matthew and Luke, it may be proper to remark, that the fuggestion feems disanalogous; because both Matthew and Luke, instead of writing their books a thousand years after the death of Jesus, are allowed to have themselves lived about the 50th or 60th year of the chrifnon æra: a period when they might have dies , been

been acquainted with others who had known Jefus in his life-time. But you hint, that the public records might have led thefe writers into the mistake found fault with by Mr. Paine. This I can hardly admit. because we positively know the jews had no other public or private record but the Bible, and here, the genealogy is as your lordship has stated it: from this then I infer, that Matthew and Luke, instead of being faithful historians, took for granted that every traditional story they heard must be true. But, reasoning from analogy, you think Sir John Hawkins and Mr. Boswell may have differed, in many circumstances, in their biography of Dr. Johnson. True, they might be pardoned, did they differ only in the manner of relating an anecdote, or the time of the day when the doctor usually dined; but who could forgive an error in chronology? who forgive Hawkins for faying that Dr. Johnfon was born in the month of November, should it appear by the register of his parifh MARIE

rish church that he was born in April? Akin with this is the error the New Testament biographers have fallen into.—But indeed these things are trivial at best, they are unimportant to those who are agreed that Jesus was not conceived by the Holy Ghost.

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With respect to king Herod and his mandamus ordering the massacre of all insants under two years of age, no one need be solicitous to prove whether it was or was not so: if it was so, he but sollowed the example of Moses, who contrived bis massacring expedition to plague Pharaoh; as Herod might have schemed his to please his high priest. But it seems most probable, that the whole story is the dash of some dramatist.

Had only the event of the crucifixion, and it's circumstances, reached us, one might have expected that "the divine immaculacy of Jesus" had long ere now been exploded.

exploded. That your lordship should continue to espouse the doctrine of Christ's Godhead, is, above all things, most surprising; above all things, least worthy of your understanding. Indeed a person feels reluctant to suppose you feriously believe in " Father, Son, and Holy Ghost---three Gods," &c. and yet, what is to be thought of a man in your office? From the Apology now before me I might eafily felect ample proofs, that you at least waver in your trinitarianism; more especially the passages which relate to the Superiority of judaism. In these, you contend, the jews are to us and all the world a living teffimony of the moral justice of God; and again, that there is but one only living and true God. Are these then trivial reasons for supposing your lordship is an unitarian? But be this as it may, the crucifixion, and circumstances which attended the crucifixion of Jesus, are to us written testimonies that he was no God. Previously to this catastrophe, and a melancholy one it

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was,

was. Jefus had wandered to and fro in hopes he should be able to elude the vigilance of his persecutors. In the course of this fugitive life he may have prophefied or spoken of his death, that Peter should deny him, and one or two more trifling circumstances: but, if he did, and that even the event was fuch as he had foretold. are we therefore required to confider him an inspired prophet? rather, are we at liberty to believe he was "God the Son?" Surely no. For any public character, placed in fimilar circumstances, might be fure that the government of his country would ultimately find a means either to intercept his friends, or bribe his depen-Such was the fituation of Jesus with regard to Peter and Judas. betrayed him for a fum of money, and the betrayer's countenance betrayed his guilt. The other denied him, and why? because he had no other means left by which he could save his own life. But, had Jesus been a God, had he been inspired, had he been

been any more than a mere man, would he have exclaimed in the bitterness of his foul, " My God! my God! why haft thou forfaken me? If it be thy will, O God, remove this bitter cup from me." Here then, my lord, is an invocation directly in point. Jefus had all along furmifed he should be put to death by his countrymen the jews: and why? just for the fame reason that the Athenians poisoned Socrates; namely, because he sought to humble the proud, reform the licentious, and teach the ignorant their moral duty! Now Jesus, aware that he could not, or perhaps unwilling to, abandon his party, Teeing death at a distance, spoke of it with calmness; but, when he found that his party, rendered formidable by the affair of Lazarus, had become the object of ferious attention among the great men of his day, he faw death was inevitable, and therefore eafily conjectured that he must soon fall a victim to the vengeance of power. is brought before Pilate; is arraigned; is requested

requested to manifest his power and authority by working even one miracle—but no miracle could he perform—he is capriciously sentenced to die the ignominious death of the cross—he is conducted to the cross, where every actio nos his, I really believe well meaning, life is forgotten by his persecutors—he struggles—he prays—he dies.—Is this then the conduct of a man, or a God?

Of his refurrection and ascension your tordship can only think as others have thought before you—that the jews would accept of no evidence, however much in point, that had for it's object—their conviction! This I must be permitted to doubt: because, had the resurrection of Jesus been a transaction of day-light notoriety, thousands must have been witnesses of the fact, and as many as saw, would have been convicted. Suppose a case: A man, wishing well to his king and country, quits London with a view to promote

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a reform of the morals of the people of Croydon in Surry; here his success equals his utmost expectations, and many people quit their handicrafts to join him; thus recruited, he proceeds to the next village, and, still continuing to preach and pray, and, on occasions, work miracles, he takes the road to London. Here he arrives, and his party grows numerous. One man, who purposely closes his eyes, and suffers himself to be led about for a day or two in that state, is brought to the reformer, who wets his finger with spittle, or, perhaps, with an oil prepared for the purpose, and removes the artificial blindness. Another is cured of a leprofy, and one is raifed from his cave: while a fet of really or feignedly drunken men have their water turned into wine. These miracles are, however, not only disbelieved, but effecqually exploded --- that is --- exploded by the philosophic part of the nation. But the reformer is now pronounced a dangerous, daring usurper, a man bent on the subver-

fion of all order and all religion: accordingly one of his followers is bribed to discover his retreat. He is apprehended, is conducted before a magistrate, is scoffed at by an indignant, perhaps hired, few, -- is capricioufly ordered for execution .--- And here. my lord, we join iffue; you have fuggefted, " Had Jesus shewn himself after his resurrection, the chief priefts would probably gathered another council, have opened it with, What do we? and ended it with a determination to put him to death." I, on the contrary, suppose, and fo I think will all who have made human nature at all their study, that, did such a person as I have described in the above parallel cafe, after being nailed to a crofs; having bled copiously; expired in convulfions, and been interred; re-appear in the fame body, and with the marks of his recent wounds (for fo we are told concerning Jesus); the whole people of London, and, with them, the whole of the inhabitants of Great Britain, would be satisfied M 2

fied with it, as an evidence of his divine power. What fay you, impartial reader?

Agreed as we are in the circumstances of the crucifixion of Jesus, your lordship can now only expect, that I should at once thut up that part of your book where the fable of the refurrection is defended: really my aftonishment is increased at every line I read on this subject. With regard to the acknowledged mistake made both by John and Mark, in their account of the precise hour at which Jesus was crucified, all must be agreed, that it is perfectly immaterial, whether it happened at ten o'clock, or nine o'clock in the morning. We have only to regret, that so good a man should have fallen a victim to fo base a party. His affectionate appeal to the feelings of his friend John, at recommending his mother to him, at once evinced, that he not only was a man, but an humane and dutiful fon: and this circumstance, far from being a mark of the truth of the immaculate

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late divinity, supernatural conception, and resurrection of Jesus, are to me positive proofs of the falsity of all the three: proofs that Jesus was born of Mary, begotten by some jew, and fathered on Joseph the carpenter. Need I, then, any longer detain your lordship on these points?

The miracles which are faid to have attended the crucifixion, particularly those mentioned by St. Matthew, directly falfify a positive and unrevoked declaration made by God himself, as it is said, after the destruction of all things-except Noah and his hoft, by the flood. This declaration, "While the earth remaineth, feedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and fummer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease." But Matthew says, " Darkness overspread the land," and this darkness prevailed from the 6th to the 9th hour in the morning. Of course, there must have been a suspension of the laws of nature for that time; yet, the declaration of M 3

of the Lord is, "And day and night shall not cease." But the day did cease, for darkness overspread the land from the 6th to the 9th hour-an earthquake rent the rocks—the faints arose out of their graves; -yet, the laws of nature, if we believe the above declaration, were never to be changed-at least, "while the earth remaineth." This declaration is likewise refutive of the affertion found in the Old Testament, "That the fun stood still,"--a thing which could not have happened, if the words of the Lord are to be believed. But the whole is a fecond edition of Homer and his deities, only not fo smoothly told.

Certainly, the omissions in Mark and Luke, especially on a subject which, if founded in truth, they must have perfectly understood, and the circumstances of which they could not but know, feem to convey, not merely a trait of their ignorance, but a strong evidence of their unbelief. Had

Mark

Mark and Luke known, that a general darkness did prevail, that the veil of the temple was rent, at the crucifixion of Jefus, they would have told us fo. And of fuch miracles, had the miracles really happened, Mark and Luke could not, in the nature of things, be ignorant. The most probable case, then, is, that both Mark and Luke were ashamed to own any thing so palpably false. In this, they have not been fingular, for John is equally filent on the subject; but your lordship considers John a mere supplement writer : yes, but even a fupplement writer would not have omitted to relate things fo likely to heighten the interest of his narrative. However, the strongest evidence of the falfity of Matthew's accounts feems to me to be, that not one of the then existing astronomers of Greece, and other places, has as much as hinted any thing about a general or partial darkness happening, at the time when Matthew's friends observed their general darkness. Had there been a M 4 general

general darkness at Jerusalem, there would likewise have been a general darkness in all the parts of the world, where the sun had only the instant before been shining in all his splendor. But nothing of the kind was observed, consequently, nothing of the kind ever happened.

Doubtless, lord Lyttleton's reflections on the conversion of the apostle Paul, are very elegant, but, I think, not very found. Paul was an enthusiast, and we are therefore at liberty to suppose, that instead of being flruck down to the ground in his journey to Damascus, by a supernatural power, he threw himfelf haftily upon the grafs, and was immediately merged in the pathos of a religious revery. In this qualm he may have fanfied, that he heard a voice, which to him had the found of one coming from a person who spoke Hebrew; but the truth feems to be, that Paul was at the time speaking to himself, asking questions and propounding them; as a man ference a may

may do, who is absorbed in a metaphysical dream. Lest this should appear an unwarrantable deduction, I shall just mention the circumstances of a situation, in which the late melodious doctor Watts was once found:-accustomed to visit his friends in the country, doctor Watts in the summer of, I am told, the year 1723, made a journey to the west of England; here he refided at the house of a lady of great piety and great distinction. Being then engaged in preparing some hymns, and part of his logical tracts for the press, the doctor occasionally forgot the regular dining hour; this happened in particular on a day when the lady had invited some of her friends to fpend part of the day 'in the doctor's elevated company.'. Dinner being ready, and the doctor not yet out of his study, the lady fent her fervant to announce the vifitants to him, and to request at the same time, that he would be ' fo good as to come to dinner.' The fervant complying with his lady's orders, went directly to the doc-M 5 tor's

tor's fludy door, and, as was usual with him on fuch occasions, rapped gently; but no answer-rapped again, still no anfwer; -in short, he continued at this work To long, that the good lady began to be uneasy: she sent to know the reason of the delay: the reason is, the doctor has made no motion, nor made any reply fince I have been at the door ? the fervant was hereupon commanded to force his way into the study—he does so-finds the doctor at his defk-tells him about dinner and the vifitants; but, instead of attending to his news, the doctor, fo much was he absorbed in metaphyfical speculations, could only tell him, 'I am metamorphozed: I am turned into a tea-pot: here,' pointing to his left arm, is the handle, and taking his nose between his fingers, here is the Spout,' and, if you do not take care, the water which shall proceed from me shall drown you.' At these last words, the servant grew imperious, and taking the doctor from his chair, laid him on his arms; but

but while he thus proceeded to carry him to the dining-room, the dreaming doctor exclaimed, 'I am grown too big—I surely cannot enter at the dining-room door.'— Compared to this religious revery, what does your lordship think of that recorded of the apostle Paul?

You will probably reply, "I dare not support the authority of scripture by the boldness of conjecture;" but, that you may be relieved from this seeming perplexity, I beg leave to tell you, that I have in many places of your book perused, with attention, your conjectural proofs.

So we forget, and fo we act our part, Without conceiving evil at the heart.

Plausible indeed is the succeeding part of your lordship's account of the life and sufferings of Paul; and of these sufferings, and the nature of his Corinthian correspondence, you leave the reader to judge, correlatively with the affertions of Mr.

M 6

Paine,

Paine, who thought Paul an improper witness of the refurrection. Paul, undoubtedly, is made to fay a number of things, which have both an air of grandeur and truth: he was indeed a fensible, sublime writer; a writer, my lord, who, in many respects, far surpasses his cotemporaries, and may be permitted to hold a diffinguished rank among the moderns. But he was liable to err:-you, however, fay that, to prove the resurrection of Christ, you think him " one of the fittest witnesses that could have been chosen:" "and," you add, " for this reason-his testimony is the testimony of a former enemy," Hence then the testimony of a trinitarian turned focinian, is the fittest testimony that can be chosen to prove the truth of focinianism. But I cannot admit that Paul was converted by a miraculous exhibition of the wrath of God. As to his appealing to " above two hundred and fifty living witnesses," and that, as your lordship fays, " before his enemies," who-

whoever is acquainted with the force of prejudice, with the tenacity of human errors, will not wonder to find that Paul persevered in his error, and vindicated his prejudices, against the opposing phalanx of his stupid countrymen. In Corinth, Paul could not convert even one jew, fo conscious were they that the resurrection, and the ascension, had been fabricated to give new vigour to a fainting party. The gentiles were indeed likely to listen to him, because they could accommodate the worship of two gods to the prevailing notions of their country, without much violation to their belief in five hundred. Your conclusion, that, inasmuch as Paul was never proved to have written untruths in his letters to the Corinthians, the things contained in his letters to the Corinthians must be true, is, I think, not apt. And should we even admit that the testimony of Paul to the resurrection of Jesus, is a true testimony, we are not, therefore, qualified to fay that it is either a fit

a fit testimony, or by any means a testimony capable of proving that Jesus really did rife from the dead .- Paul's appeal to his enemies, if fuch they were, merely tends to shew how lightly they esteemed the proofs formerly alledged in favour of the refurrection: fo lightly too did they esteem even Paul's affertion, that they did not take the trouble to confute it. Upon the whole, there appears to be nothing in your lordship's Apology for the Bible, that can satisfactorily recommend revealed religion; but there is a great deal in it that makes deism valuable to the man, and worthy of the philosopher. You, it is true, seem to think that the deift cannot share in those felicitous hopes which the christian enjoys: but what are those hopes, when the ground of his belief has been removed? Every human being has the fame good reason to hope, and to trust, that the mercy of God will be extended to him, on all necessary occasions, in death, and at judgment; for, as we are all one family

family on earth, so must it have been intended, that we should all equally partake in, and share the bleffings of heaven. Whether we believe that Christ was the son of Joseph, the jew, or of any other man, is a matter of no moment to our eternal interests; but it is of infinite moment that we do as Jesus commanded his followers to do-that we should love God with all our hearts, and love our neighbours as ourselves. Whoever does this, must experience peace of mind in this life, and may fafely fix his hopes on the happiness of another; and without imposing upon the fenses, without distorting the laws of nature, we can admit that Jesus was the well-wisher of his fellow men. To promote his laudable reform, he may indeed have gone a little out of the plain road; but as I cannot know his precise difficulties, I have no willingness to upbraid his conduct. Whether he had permitted his zeal to mislead his reason, and, in this state, imagined himself possessed of powers which

which he did not, and could not, poffess; or, whether he was a necessitous impostor; are thoughts which may, now and then, press themselves upon us: but such considerations, opposed to the maxims he inculcated, and the obligations we owe to God, fociety, and ourselves, must to every one appear unimportant. Viewing him in his better character of moralist and public teacher, we are filled with tranquil veneration for his name, and must applaud his defign, reluctant to impugn his life. And if in his character as miraculift there may be objectionable traits, we are to prefume, he all along fought the good of mankind. Even with fuch intentions a man might be tempted a little out of the common path; for in those days Jerusalem demanded a powerful corrective. The Romans had usurped every right, and every privilege, that was valuable to the jews; this Jesus knew, and he therefore made the law his study. In the writings called those of the prophets, but particularly Isaiah, dold w

Isaiah, he might have read loofe hints, or poetic ejaculations, or fomething like a prophecy concerning a Messiah. But the truth is, that all Isaiah wrote, either referred to the age in which he himself lived, or that immediately following. Nevertheless Jesus attempted to free those hints from the obscurity of allegory, and being convinced he was not born in wedlock, and perhaps unacquainted with his real father, he very pioufly threw himfelf upon heaven for protection, and took God for his father. That he was a man of great talents, and deep research, is evident from many of his fayings—one in particular— "I was from the beginning of all things;" -a faying which, however apparently divine, means no more than that, inasmuch as there must be a first cause, so he could trace himself, link to link, to that cause, and of course conclude, as any other man may, " I was from the beginning of all things;" that is, human life, and human reason, have existed from the beginning of

of their first creation. Of this kind was that faying, " I do the work of my father who fent me," which might now be used by the ministers of what is called the gofpel, so far as these ministers conform to truth. It is true, Jesus was once peculiarly circumflanced with regard to his fatherin law Joseph, and his real mother Mary: thefe devout perfons being in the porch of a certain house, where Jesus was addressing his difciples and followers, took an opportunity of announcing a wish to conwerfe privately with him; but when this wish was expressed, he replied-" These," pointing to the disciples and the auditory, " are my parents." In the nature of things, this was impossible: but his then state of mind induced the fentiment. Yet fuch proofs as these, both of his philosophic fagacity, and keenness of discrimination, entitle Jesus to a place among the greatest men of antiquity. He was the Confucius of the jews; and had his followers kept his commandments, and practifed the

the morality these contained, instead of cruel wars, instead of haughty persecution, instead of violent schisms, we should now have had a China in Europe. When we contemplate China in Asia, how much does our veneration for their Confucius rife above that which we entertain for the teachers of christianity at home! How much above that which even the name of Jefus inspires! The Chinese, a vast and opulent people, know no more about christianity, than they learn from being frequently obliged to fit in judgment on it's immoral missionaries. Yet your lordship contends, that christianity is the revealed religion of heaven. I never can concede this point to any man: for, if I did, I must deny the evidence of that nation, above all nations known to us the most peaceable, and perhaps the most moral. Christianity has not reached their hearts; but the found philosophy of their teacher is deeply rooted in their minds. They are temperate, we are riotous; they

are at peace, we at war; they are honest, we are jugglers; they honour virtue, we debase her votaries; they love, and homour, and exalt learning, we fear, and difhonour, and demean her. They are preferved in the exercise of their several trades against the violence of party, against the intrigues of electioneers, by their laws. Our laws expose us to all these hardships. Their mandarins watch over them with the tender care of affectionate parents, while Europe is worried by the wolves of christianity, snarled at by her--mastiff fects; and if nations or individuals complain, they are instantly told-" Here is the Bible-our divine authority-it speaks of trinitarianism---condemns arianismand every other wicked and blasphemous diffenter."--- If you go to the diffenters, they too have the Bible, and can wrest a text of this book to support their favourite opinions, and to abet schism. This is the cafe, it has long been the cafe, and of the market in the gold and I write

I write only with a view to assist at the funeral of the oppressive cause.

The cause, my lord, is the Bible. This book, contradictory in itself, affords subtersuge to despots, is the soul of superstition, the scare-crow of nature, and the subversive enemy of reason and truth: insomuch, that, when kingdoms are to be desolated, it is done--- in the name of God."

Without a claim to divine origin, the civil code of Europe is adequate to all the purposes of correcting, or reproving, or punishing, or rewarding, the civil inhabitants of Europe. Her military is in like manner established upon military laws, and the warlike inhabitant holds himself amenable to these laws. And might not our duty to God—our duty to ourselves—our duty to our neighbours—be taught and inculcated from the pulpit, without the imperious authority of anti-divine laws? Let the

the teachers or the expounders of morality be allowed a competent falary, that is, a falary which shall not leave them at the mercy of proud names or pious titles, but a falary which shall equally resist the vices of poverty and the crimes of plenty. Not, as is now the case, have a man to preach a morning fermon for four or five shillings, or at most half a guinea, leaving him to the mercy of hunger for the remainder of the bleffed day: fuch men cannot fervently wish the success of a cause in which they are, from their habits and modes of education, compelled to engage; nay, they must seriously wish it "at hell and to the devil." For an equalization of church revenue, as of that of the state, I am therefore an unambitious advocateunambitious, my lord, because I am neither a curate nor a subaltern officer, but an obferver of the fufferings of both; an obferver, my lord, of the miseries of man, accumulated upon him by the iniquitous apostles of modern christianity.

Miracles

Miracles alone preserve these men in their places, and, what is fill more degrading to reason, these too the unwrought miracles of Christ the sectarist; of a man who professedly defired the happiness of man, who fourned wealth, who abhorred distinctions, who loved the poor, and was as humane as he was devout and zealous! These too the miracles, on the credit of which your lordship recommends christianity to the merchants and mechanics of England; but you forget that their morals are corrupted, not by infidelity, but by the penury which flows from power. Lighten their burthens, and you will foon find them altered in their lives, and mended in their manners: but now they are the habitual flaves of avarice, or poverty, or bribery, or corruption; and all this the effects of the shameful prodigality attached to rank, and of it's necessary concomitant, cabinet errors. A great deal is always urged from the too long admitted, but certainly more nominal than true, prevalence of wombborn mola

born vice. This is the doctrine of original fin, a doctrine expressly derogative of. the revealed laws of God. Thefe laws are those of nature: nor are they undefinable. Among them is example .-- We know, the influence of example is greater than that of precept; thus an infant may be trained to virtue; and, I think, more easily than to vice. It is a fact that an infant may be taught to repeat and imitate, and ultimately do, any thing of which human nature is capable: now our nature is more prone to virtue than vice, to happiness than misery, to generosity than malice, and we can fooner be made good men and wife citizens, than bad men and foolish citizens; because it is more natural for us to defire happiness than misery: confequently virtue, being the foul of happiness, must be more natural to us than vice, and fo of all the other passions. To these facts the reply will probably be--- Look at fociety, look at the nurlery, look at the schools, look at the universities, -- This I have mod done.

done, and made the feenes of those respective fituations the ground-work of my positions. For in all those places I discover only the influence of example, precept is forgot. However, it would much exceed the bounds usually allowed to an ordinary fized letter, did I here enter into all the views, and meet all the arguments for and against the natural properties of man. What I have faid is merely meant to shew, that an alleviation of the distress of society on the one hand, and the discontinuing of luxury on the other, are alone capable of caufing that reform in the morals of mankind, which your lordship so warmly advocates. In vain do you reprobate infidelity, while oppression forms one-third of the laws of the land. In vain do you incolcate religion, while poverty is a necesfary consequence to that oppression. It will not do to affert that man is naturally vicious, for man is not naturally fo. By nature we certainly possess some passions; and these, if left to the dictation of poverty

verty or luxury, are always fure to grow vicious, impotent, and, in force, unwieldy. There are but two classes in fociery withe very rich and the very poor. The former is pampered by the industry of the latter, and this industry is stimulated by talkmafters, who, instead of forming a third independent class generally die infolvent. Thefe, then, are the evils which ought to be eradicated, and not the effects of Paine's or any other man's deiftical writings but the effects of such writings are the reverse of what the canting religious world pretend, for which reason alone they and their authors have been denounced. I am certain, genuine deifm is the religion of heaven. Concerning man in the origin of his specie, the Bible would attempt to tell us, that Adam was a being of a perfect hature; yet, this perfection was to be without knowledge, without fenfe, without eyes matural, or eyes mental; in short, the writer of Genefis defires us to believe, that Adam was a piece of a god, and Eve half Bhir

half a goddess; but, that a speechless ferpent had more art than them both. By means of this serpent we are told that death and fin entered the world: whereas death is the necessary companion of life; for God himself could not have created a being capable of living for ever on this our globe. Sin, again, is the subversion of reason, and this principally arises from misguided instruction. Was the produce of man's handicraft more justly distributed, we should feel fewer wants, and hear of less of the depredations now committed on property by those in the lower ranks of life. But these are topics of intricacy and importance, and I shall reserve their discussion for a future day. What I maintain is, that the ferpent, the fall of Adam, death and fin, as described in the Old Testament, are impostures and infamous. Yet infamous as they are, they have had their dirty reign in the world: they have been the means of hindering man from attempting the acquirement of perfections,

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of which his nature is capable; they have caused the belief of an evil spirit to be inculcated, and made the devil an apolgift for the crafts of men. But the day of their eternal dissolution is approaching; the day approaches when reason shall triumph over vice, when even the church of England must acknowledge her errors. glorious triumphs the human mind may press with calm but intrepid confidence; may press forward without violating the duty reciprocally subfishing between nation and nation, or between man and man; without striking distinctions from their well-acquired eminence, nor deffroying laws which guarantee the peace of the monarch, or the independence of the fubject, or the industry and the virtues of These things can, and ought to be enjoyed, without that degradation of nature fo impudently accomplished by the impolture of miracles; and, as yet, perfevered in by the flaves of floth: by men who will not open their minds to that conviction

viction which the study of nature, unembarrassed by prejudice, will effectually impress. This study is merely that of the constitution and modifications of matter, actuated by laws now inherently contained in itself, but derived primarily from God.

section and which the diefe In contemplating the flructure of this globe, the nature of it's inhabitants, productions, and operations, we may be alarmed at the power of it's creator; but we cannot misapprehend the wildom which brought the whole into being, and adapted mere chaos to the harmony of a vegetating globe. We must discover, that this our planet originally received certain powers, and that these powers now enable us to exist in an almost independent statethat this existence shall perish in the natural course of progressive generation and regeneration; because the earth possesses only a certain portion of vegetating power, which when exhausted, must occasion a general fuf-N 3 OF STORY

fulperfion of the laws of motion, of life, and vegetation; in thort, of all the laws now known, or existing under the general title of the laws of nature. This fufpension must necessarily involve the existence of this planet in it's present form; but we have reason to suppose, that another planet will be erected on it's ruin. In the fame way, the human race, confidered as a whole, may be faid to be an independent being, who received certain portions of life and intellect at his creation, never to be increased, but always to be diffributed according to the wifdom of nature, or the climate of his birth, " Individuals there certainly are, who feem to possess peculiar and high mental powers, but the collective powers of human intellect can neither be limited nor extended; and the Deity, by altering these necessary laws, would trespais the laws of order. Of this, however, he is incapable; confequently, Jefus Chrift, being the mere fon of fome jew, could not have possessed the ability of work-

working miracles, but could only have possessed a certain portion of the faculties common to all men, and no faculty or power unattainable by any man. From these reflections, I am led to turn aside and contemplate the tales so artfully told in the Old and New Testaments in them, felves palpably erroneous and bafely wicked. The writers of them, with but a glimmering of philosophic light, have spun o fort of chaotic flory from the incoherent notions of their aftrologers; but, fuch the struggles of innate truth in their minds, that even this chaotic story, when brought to the touchstone of reason, will be found to contain faint proofs of the natural theory of creation, will be found to contain, "while the earth remaineth, feed time and harvest, and cold and heat, and fummer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease;" which evinces, that the astrologers of that period had conceived fome notion of the felf-existence of this planet that the earth shall exist only as long NA A MEST

long as it's ability to generate and regenefate existed; and that even God himfelf cannot, for a moment, fulpend the laws of nature. I fay, not for a moment; and whoever feriously considers the subject, whoever reflects on the dangerous confequences attendant upon even the burfling of a blood-veffel in a human body, and who admits and confiders at the fame time; that the fun is to the universe what life is to man; he, I say, who contemplates these things, will not hastily say with Matthew," And there was a general darkness from the 6th to the 9th hour; nor with Joshua, " The sun and the moon stood still." When, again, we reflect on the freedom of man as a moral agent, and conflitution of his faculties as a phylical being, we must, at once, perceive, that it was not only impossible, but unnecessary, for Jesus, or any other man, to be a real propher, or a real miracle-worker. Befides, the very manner in which the flory of the miraculous conception is setold, sand long which

which I cannot but suppose the contrivance of shrewd and deep minds, is an indirect proof, that the persons who contrived it were aware, that to be believed by the superstitious gentiles, they must make Mary with child by a God, conceived by a God, raifed from the grave by a God, and elevated to heaven by a God. Confequently, the contrivers of the miraculous conception believed, that the powers of the human mind cannot be extended even by God himself. But these. my lord, are speculations, hastily, but not prematurely expressed; they are fources of my confolation in my infidel condition, and may yet prove entertaining to the partners of my guilt-if guilt it be, to think revealed religion a real impofture

I do not merely think, but believe, that the doctrines of immaculate conception, divine mission, resurrec-N 5

to this for Privou

tion, and alcention, as applied to Jelus, are impostures, which had their origin in the fanaticilm of the followers of that man. Already I have adduced the reasons which more immediately induce this belief. Reafoning from the laws of order, I have thewn, there are things which the Deity himself cannot do among these is, the delegation of a power to work miracles. It is impossible to actuate finite faculties to the performance of things above the power of reason; nor can man properly do any thing which man cannot properly comprehend. As to the doctrines or behef of the refurrection of man, and judgment after death, the apostle Paul, in his examination before Felix, contended, that they were held by the pharifees long before the birth of Jesus Christ. Your lordthip does not feem to think fo, for you contend, that the only thing which exalts christianity above all other religious, is the new, and before then, unknown revelation of the resurrection of man after death. But

this is not now more centain, than it was in the days of the pharifees, because the pharifees believed without the aid of the impostures called miracles; and those who reason rightly, must now believe it without this aid, or not believe it all For myfelf, I have no difficulty on my mind concerning the truth of the doctrine; in fact, it is the only rational opinion which can on fuch a subject be held. In the nature of things, it is impossible that God should have created man to share only the toils, or the few uncertain comforts of a sublunary existence; he must have designed us to pass into another world on the wings of his love. His love for man, is the fource of human wifdom; but, inafmuch as this wisdom cannot be rendered as igeneral, nor as capacious in this life, as the mind feems to aim at, there certainly is another state of existence where those powers, now, but feebly dawning, shall come into action with all the refulgence of spiritual wisdom. In this world there are four effences, of which N 6 whole

we can have no just apprehensions fire, air, earth, and water; we know that fuch elements do exist, but we do not know what they consist of, how they exist, nor when their existence may be superseded. Thefe, indeed, are things of which, as finite beings, we most remain entirely ignorant, while we are confined to this globe; but, no fooner has the principle of dife abandoned the body, than we enter into linew order of things. Here we may perhaps be years, and perhaps not days, before our means of attaining knowledge are increased but, be it sooner or later, there can be no doubt, but that our capacities will expand in proportion to the majefty of our new existence. Into the world of fpirits, we certainly cannot carry our inert natural bodies, because they rot and corrupt, and oltimately vanish in the earth; Mingling with fellow duft, my masculine limbs shall in this sphere be converted perhaps into grafs, which grafs may hereafter form part of the food of forme cow; whofe Ne

whose milk may even be drunk by my children. But not so the vital principle.
This entity, which I ever have personified
as human, will assume a spiritual body,
and be associated with fellow spirits; our
views and our avocations may indeed be
different, but the object and the end of
both must always be the same. If our lot
be that of the good, the end and object of
our whole lives must be good: if on the
contrary, we experience the contrary asfections.

However, I fear I have trespassed too long on your lordship and the reader's time in this soliloquy:—a soliloquy I certainly own it is; but remember, it is not the soliloquy of an enthusiast, but an almost inbred stoick: it is the soliloquy of one who studies nature constantly, and is assured that God is a being of perfect wisdom and immutive goodness. Contrary to this opinion are many of the opinions held and inforced by your lordship. Some of these I have.

I have, in different parts of this book, already noticed. To me they then had, and, upon retrospection, now have, the air of last shift affertions of this fort are those which concern Moses and the Midianites, boys and women, in That debauchee lawgiver ordered those unoffending persons to be slaughtered, and kept the Supposed unadulterated young women for himself and his free-booting fect. Of this you have demanded proof, but the proof is in the nature of the thing itself. You fay, you fee nothing in it but " good policy, combined with mercy;" I fee nothing in it but ferociousness, joined to lust. Your warmth upon this occasion is certainly very pardonable, but you know that passionate de lamation is not found reason. Slavery, and not debauchery, you think, was the fate of the innocent young women of Midian: now flavory is no part of God's providence, Moles, therefore, configned those young women to flavery, not by God's commend, but according to his capricious avea Lto

pricious wiffies. In flavery they were liable to be debauched; indeed, conjecture is, in this cafe, needless; for a man who could contrive the flory of a naked Adam and naked Eve, merely with a view to reconcile those naked shows to the Ifraelites, which were the luxuries of this man of God, would not blush to debauch, nay ravish the Midianites. My lord, I believe all I write on this subject .- I believe it, because it is impossible that God, not withstanding that you alledge he " creates evil." can be a despot, or delight in vice. It was a rank, a very rank despotism, which caused the enslaving of the poor Midianites; and debauchery was the only relaxation which this flavery afforded .-- Is then the religion of Moses and the men called prophets the religion of heaven?-No:-it is the religion of tyrants and of fools. Confider but the life of Abraham, the covenant maker: he caused his wife to deny him-to assume his fister's characterto nob the king of Egypt and he at length absconded Bleech

absconded with both his wife and the plunder. When he had worried this wife with jealousies, he was permitted by her to take Hagar, his fervant, to his bed; by her he had Ishmael, who was faid to be the fruits of God's love for Abraham, but who was afterwards, with his mother, kicked from the protection of the favourites of this God. Thefe, and a thousand such, were the iniquitous derelictions of father Abraham. But Lot was, of all men, the most notorioully debauched and criminal. 1-This man, as your lordship well knows, is represented in scripture as the peculiar favourite of heaven, infomuch, that not one, but two 'angels were fent to refeue him and his wife from the fate of the vicious Sodomites .-- will not here thew the shameful absurdity of the account given by the writer of Genefis, of the conduct of the angels on this occasion; it is enough that the reader is told, they came to the door of Lot's house, and here parlied, between doubts and fears, whether they abloonded fhould

should enter or proceed a different way. But Lot! thou vile, thou apostate, thou infernal oprofitute! on the tops of the mountains, as in the grove, you delighted in committing fuicide on virtue.--- My lord, I am now almost in a passion; but let us restrain it, and read from the author of Genesis, the 29th verse, " And Lot went up out of Zoar, and dwelt in the mountain, and his two daughters with him; for he feared to dwell in Zoar: and he dwelt in a cave, he and his two daughters. And the first-born said unto the younger, Our father is old, and there is not a man in the earth to come in unto us after the manner of all the earth. Come, let us make our father drunk with wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve feed of our father. And they made their father drink wine that night. And the first-born went in, and lay with her father, and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose." Without any comment from me, this quotation amply vindicates

iny attack upon what is called revealed religion, because it fully resolves your two
propositions, "If the history of the jews
be not true, christianity must be salse;"
and "the New Testament must follow the
sate of the Old;" into proofs of the ungodliness of that fort of christianity, for
which yourself, Athanasius, and others,
have been pleased to call divine. Is it not
so? Are not the words of the daughters of
Lot in direct force on this subject?

Words, my lord, at which humanity must blush; nay, they are such as the brutes themselves, could they speak, would blush to utter. They say, "And the first born went in, and lay with her father, and he perceived not when she lay down and when she arose." Yet Lot was actually in congress, actually got his daughter with child.—Oh, vile father, oh vile daughter, but chiefly you, writer of the book of Genesis—you have libelled the Almighty God; you have misrepresented the laws of nature.

ture, have denied their influence, have told an untruth; and the venerable bishop of Landaff knows it is so. My lord, you must know that it was impossible for the daughter of Lot to have lain with Lot, to have had children by Lor, without Lot knowing it. You know this from experience; at least, I presume, you have never yet got a child withour your knowledge—

Never been fir'd with nature's gen'rous flame, in Without a feeling knowledge of the dame.

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But, however much these Bible indecencies admit of the severity of satire, I am not disposed to add to the catalogue of soul terms, nor shall I at present animadwert on the many more instances which that book affords, of transactions equally abhorrent from virtue, and as much, if not more, uncharacteristic of a just God. Only these shocking untruths impelled my avowal of persect deism; only these changed, or partly changed the sentiments ments I really entertained at the time of commencing this Examination—an Exmination, to which your own concellions likewife pointed the way.

Having faid this, the remainder of my duty, as it respects either your lordship or the public, can only consist in assuring you and them, that I am in all these, and other inquiries, governed by an ambition to promote the moral metioration of mankind." This principle will, I trust, never be superfeded by one less worthy; and so long as it continues prevalent, the mind must be prepared to receive impressions of truth.—The instant I am shewn the fallacy of my arguments, and the unreasonableness of my objections, I shall openly abandon both—but not till then.

By your lordship I do not expect to be made a convert, for you have already a determination to be silent, " should your book meet with Mr. Paine's public notice,

tice, or that of any other man." But fuch a resolution as this, if tenaciously persisted in, will certainly much detract from the opinion the public has hitherto held of your magnanimity: it may even lead people to suppose, that you have written merely to defend a particular establishment, leaving your book and the members of this establishment to their fate. Could this be apprehended, our fentiments of efteem must be changed to contempt, and our admiration of genius to a disapprobation of the man. In fast, fuch conduct would entirely ruin your character; and, should a proud taciturnity produce and rivet these suspicions, this ruin will be shunned in vain. To write, as you have done, and yet be determined not to defend your fentiments, is a fort of despotic predilection in favour of error---for you have erred in some very material points. The legislature of Great Britain does, it is true, make laws; and when these have been pasfed by a majority of the two houses of par--3-25

parliament, and fanctioned by the king, they become the laws of the land. But even these laws are subject to be repealed, if found oppreffive or impolitic. Now, had your lordship been even appointed by the members of your party to write a defence of communed principle, you ought at least to maintain the privilege of conrecting your errors; which would amount to that exercised by the parliament, when an unwife law is repealed and delivered

trainibilities directed with the search similarities.

You profess to wish Mr. Paine may become a convert to ehriffianity; but, should Mr. Paine publish a book, in which he fhould reply to your arguments, and declare that he waited to be convicted, you fay, or feem to fay, that you shall never advance one step further to effect his converfion. But, my lord, I cannot suppose you have acted in any other capacity than that of a man speaking or writing his own fentiments, with the right of holding them fo long as the public approved of their **科林**公公公

pertinancy and their justice. What I have said by way of conjecture to the contrary, are merely the surmises of a mind which is prepared for the worst, still anticipating the best—a mind warm in the cause of humanity, and as little prone to public or private controversies, as the state of society will admit.

tonar

But, should my situation at any time impel fuch a declaration as that of your lordship, I fincerely hope I may be able again to take up the gauntlet with candour, with humility, with decorum, and patience. If in these, if in any of these, I may have failed in this my unbiaffed inquiry after truth, I pray God to forgive what of either has undefignedly crept into my book. And, should any infusion of pride, any shew of felf-sufficiency, any difposition to dictate to others, be discovered in these letters, I indulge myself in the hope, that it will all be imputed to zeal in the detection of what to me had the appearance

pearance of error. Of your lordship I have only to request, that you will be pleafed to review your concluding declaration, that fo you may examine it's tendency, and guard against those evils which perféverance in fuch filence may possibly private, controverfact, its ille flate of stare

With undiminished deference,

But, thould my, mar I am at any time

impel fuch a decimation as the out your slike in you I am My Bord; I a Albrol

Your's, &c. rumilies to the decention, and ma-

I seed to was di it pla A. MACLEOD.

London, May 21, 1796 -



-cia and had a gerratuma new stab and

Page 31, line 8, for Robert, read Richard.

